

CHRISTS  
Counsell to his lan-  
guishing Church of  
SARDIS.

OR,  
The dying or decaying  
Christian, with the meanes and  
helpes of his recovery and  
strengthening.

BY  
OBADIAH SEDGWICKE,  
B. of D. late Preacher to the Inhabi-  
tants of *S. Mildreds Bredstreet*,  
*London*

*αἰὶν' ὡπλίσθη τὸ χρίσμα τῷ Θ-ῷ, 1 Tim. 1.6.*  
*Frulla velociter currit, qui prius quam ad metas ven-*  
*it decessit, Greg. mor. l. 1. c. 40.*

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S. GELLIBRAND, at the brasen  
Serpent in *S. Pauls Church-yard*,

1 6 4 C.







To the right **W**orship-  
full, Captaine *Nicholas Crispe*  
Esquire, and Mistresse *Anne Crispe*  
his pious consort, To Master *Samuel*  
*Crispe*, and Mistresse *Katharine* his vertu-  
ous wife, with all the rest of the Parish-  
oners, my loving friends, the Inha-  
bitants in *Saint Mildreds*,  
*Bredstreet.*

My deare and worthy friends,

**S**aint Bernard with  
a very apt phrase,  
answered a speciall  
friend of his, challenging of  
him in the streines of affecti-  
on, thus, O scrutans renes

A 3

et

## The Epistle

et corda Deus, &c. quòd diligam illum ex dono tuo & suo merito, tu scis & ego sentio, quatenus autem diligam, tu scis, ego nescio, (*that is*) *Oh Lord, thou who knowest and searchest the inmost closets of the heart, that I love my friend, thou knowest it, and I know it: how much I love him thou doest know, but I doe not know. The same I apply to my selfe and all of you; if suspecting my affection to you, because of my departing*

## Dedicatory.

parting from you, Lord, thou who knowest all things, thou knowest that I love them, and I know it, how much thou onely knowest, but I cannot expresse.

You were a people (of all that hitherto I have lived with, and of all that ever I preached unto) of the most generall union with your selves, and of the most liberal and unwearied affection to your Minister; the maine scruple many times to mee, was, lest divers of you should

## The Epistle

out-stretch your measures.

All the respects which you owed and shewed to my Ministry, and all the encouragements which you heaped on my selfe, I doe now the second time publike-ly acknowledge : and as my thankfulnessse presents it self to you all, so in speciall manner to you, much honoured Captaine, and your worthy wife, by whose good opinion and affection I was (through Gods mercy) brought unto that place : you have so advanced

## Dedicatory.

vanced your favours both to my selfe and some friends of mine, that I doe most gladly embrace this present occasion of publike testimony and acknowledgement; not that it is sufficient to cleare all accounts, but onely that you may know, kindeneses long since given, are never lost in a thankefull breast.

My desire for you all is, that ye may be saved, and my desire to you all is, that yee would seriously answer the many precious and heavenly opportunities

## The Epistle

opportunities of Gods grace;  
it is not onely a vanity, but a  
danger, a danger both ex-  
treame and sure, to dally with  
our soules: God hath sowne  
much seed by many of his ser-  
vants among you, and beleeve  
me, he expects an harvest, wee  
cannot answer great meanes  
with great sinfulnessse or little  
goodnesse. To whom any  
thing is given, of them some-  
thing is required, (even the  
man of one talent was made  
accountable) but to whom  
much is given, of them much  
shall

## Dedicatory

shall be required. My deare friends if ye be wise, be wise for your selves, be good indeed. You honour our ministry, and provide well for your owne eternall good; when you goe into an holy way, and goe on in that way, the sight is incongruous, and the account will be sad, when Ministers doctrines are very heavenly, and peoples conversation are very earthly and sinfull; a melting heaven and a hardned earth meet ill. At length let us see our sermons

## The Epistle

mons and pains in your lives; we preach and dye, and men heare and dye; we preach out our bealth, our strength, our lives; Oh that our hearers would take pittie on us, and mend their hearts and waies. If we boast that our meanes are greater then others, wee must tremble also to thinke if our accounts, before God should prove worse then others.

Therefore for your parts, as you have begun, so with all alacrity and industry, continue



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## Dedictory.

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es; nue and persevere. Our life  
en is short, duties many, worke  
ut daily, and reward sure and e-  
ur nough. An eternity with  
rs God should make us good, and  
nd keepe us doing, and bold us  
s. faithfull, and make us fruit-  
es full. To the everlasting arms  
ee of his protection, and to the  
if perpetuall influences of his  
d grace and mercy in Christ, he  
o- commends you all, who is, to  
you all,

Your much obliged and  
affectionate friend,

ORADIAH SEDGWICK.

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## To the Reader.

**I**F thou expectest in this Treatise what is curious and branched over with art, spare thine eye any further travell, it is not here: diuine doctrines serve rather for the stomacke then the palate. In preaching these Sermons, I followed Saint Cyprians direction to Donatus, to make choise not of Diserta, but Fortia, I looked very little at harmony which might take the eare, but most of all at energy, which might reach the conscience.

## To the Reader.

I know well that there is a lawfull and seasonable use of learning; I am not of his minde who would have Preachers study no booke but the Bible; onely this, Ministers (if I mistake not) must consider their auditors, and then and there, use their choiser learning, when and where it may not amaze, but profit; when all is summed up, this will be found the most comfortable truth, no Preacher is so learned, as he who can save soules.

And now if thou pleasest, reade the worke, and receiue this counsell from me; aboue all, strive for spirituall life (it is thy greatest honour to be good) and when thou hast obtained it, take heed of dying, the dead man and the dying Christian, are  
two

## To the Reader.

two sad sights; it is wofull either to be a brand falling into bell, or to be a star falling downe from heauen: the rising sunne is more and more beautifull, but the waining moone is more full of spots and darkenesse: though all may not be lost, yet his shipwrackes are high who hath lost much in his jewels, and almost all in his comforts: no more but this, keepe beauenly things as thou wouldest keepe heauen it selfe.

Thine in any

spirituall furtherance;

OBADIAH SEDGWICK.



CHRISTS  
COVNSELL  
to His languishing  
CHURCH.

REVEL. 3. 2, 3 verses.

*Be watchfull and strengthen the things  
that remaine, which are ready to dye, for I  
have not found thy works perfect before God.*

*Remember therefore how thou hast recei-  
ved and heard, and hold fast and repent, &c.*

**T**He author of this  
Booke was IESUS  
CHRIST; the  
pen-man was John  
the Apostle, the matter of it, is  
B generally

generally mysterious; the persons whom it concernes are the seven Churches in *Asia*, but the scope of it extends to all the Churches, succeeding the Apostles to the end of the world.

*Ephesus* (the first of these Churches) is taxed for apostasie; *Smyrna* (the second of them) is encouraged to constancie; *Pergamus & Thyatira* (the third and fourth of them) are charged for permission of some idolatry; *Sardis* (the fifth of them) is deeply questioned for hypocrisie; *Philadelphia* (the sixth of them) is commended for fidelity, and *Laodicea* (the last of them) is condemned for neutrality or indifferency.

In

In this Epistle to *Sardis*, you have,

1 An inscription: 1. To whom? unto the Angell of the Church in *Sardis*.

2 From whom? He that hath the seven spirits (·) Christ, who hath manifold abundance of spirituall gifts and graces in his owne disposing, and imparts them by his spirit.

2 A description of that Angell and Church; what they were,

1 In semblance; Thou hast a name that thou livest, *q. d.* so thou boastest, and so others imagine that thou art furnished with vitals for doctrine and discipline.

B 2

2 In

2 In substance; but thou art dead, *q d.* there is no such matter, thy Gold is but Tinne, and thy piety but formality: the powers of truth and grace were extremely fainting & languishing, and as it were expiring.

3 A direction of them what to doe, the which direction is,

1 Generall, *Be watchfull or awake*: no reformation without diligent and serious consideration.

2 Speciall, where,

1 The matter of it, *Strengthen the things which remaine, that are ready to dye*

2 The equity of it, *for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

3 The



3 The manner of performance of this direction expressed in two particulars.

1 In remembrance of the good truths, or rather of the manner how they once received and heard them, amplified with a speciall exhortation to hold them fast,

2 In repentance of all evill, especially of their hypocrisie and languor, (*And repent.*)

The matter is so large which might be insisted on, as that I know not well where to pitch, I shall onely be able (as reapers doe in the full field) to cut down many particulars, and leave the binding of them up to some one more skilfull harvest

man: take them thus.

1 That people living under evangelicall teaching, may yet be but in a decaying and dying condition (*the things that be ready to dye.*)

2 That spirituals are to be succoured and strengthened if once they grow languishing and dying, (*strengthen the things that, &c.*)

3 That the estate, though visibly faire to the eyes of men, yet it may be really imperfect in the eyes of God, [*I have not found thy works perfect before God.*]

4 A right remembrance and retention of originall truths, are the way to revive a dying christian,

christian, to fetch him againe.

[Remember therefore, &c.]

6 Spirituall decayings doe require spirituall repentings:

[and repent.]

I begin with the first of these,  
*viz.*

That people living under e-  
vangelicall teaching, may yet  
be but in a dying condition: for  
the opening of this assertion,  
premise with me these particu-  
lars.

*Doff.*

*Three  
things  
premised.*

1 There are three sorts of  
people who may live under the  
preaching of the word.

1 Some manifestly prophane,  
who are starke dead, there is  
neither the substance, nor the  
semblance of any heavenly life  
in them.      B 4      2 Others

2 Others are cunningly hypocriticall, whose lease of profession seemes to live, but secret core of corruption convinceth that they are dead.

3 A third sort is of such as are vitally good, there is a spirituall life truly implanted in them, and a profession in some measure answerable thereunto.

The proposition I understand even of this latter sort, that even these may be in a dying condision.

a This dying disposition properly consists in a manifest decay of spirituall principles; for looke as when a man is dying in a naturall way, the vitall principles of *Calidum* and *Humidum*

*midum* are notoriously impaired; so when a Christian is dying in a spirituall way, those principles of heavenly life within him, are exceedingly sinking and failing, and decaying: there is not that strength, nor that activity, nor that assiduity in the spirit or heart of man, as formerly, but he works weakly (like a dying pulse) and *cum levis facultatibus*, as a man goes with lame legges, and a sickly body, so he walkes with wounded principles and a languishing pining soule.

*Simile.*

3 But if you will have the point in a more ample manner, then know that a Christian may be dying partly,

I In

*A Christian may  
be dying  
in seven  
things.*

1 In profession, his very leaves may wither; that visible forwardnesse of zeale and diligence, that wonted presence of his at the ordinances, they may admit of an extreme sluggishnesse and remissenesse; he may grow a stranger to God.

2 In conversation: His hand may shrivell and disflourish: that former association of himselfe with the people of God, may now be no delight, and profitable discourses of heaven and of holinesse, may now be much laid aside, there may now drop no such waters from his fountaine, and very little good from his society: his candle may burne darkely, and  
with

with a very imperfect and loo-  
sing light.

3 In affection, that flame of  
love and sea of desires, and *Eden*  
of delight, may like a great fire  
be reduced to a few coales and  
cinders: Christ puts the Ephe-  
sians in minde of their first love  
that it was left, *Revelat. 2. 4.*  
though not absolutely for na-  
ture, yet eminently for measure,  
and *S. Paul* upbraideth the Ga-  
lathians for that strange coole-  
nesse in their affections to his  
person and ministry, whereas  
at the first, their zeale was so  
forward, as that their very eyes  
*Gal. 4. 15.* were at his service.

*Revel.*  
2. 4.

*Gal. 4. 15*

4 In duties which may now  
be chopt off by intermission, or  
wrought

wrought out with voluntary distractions, either none, or rugged, done with a kinde of formality, coldly, chilly, carelessly.

Heretofore no time was too long, no diversion sufficiently excusable, no praying satisfying without lamenting compunctions and groanings of spirit, or without some more fervent violence and wrestling with God.

But now this and other duties are like a pulse hardly felt; words suffice, and almost an *op as operatum* is enough.

*Simile.*

§ In judgement, that whereas formerly the minde and understanding were (like the Needle looking



looking to the Polestarre) with much admiration and delectation taken up with the meditations of God and Christ, and divine truths and waies. Now vaine objects are doted upon poore, inferiour, transitory delights and profits, take up the lodging, and so fill the soule, that it becomes almost a stranger to holy contemplations and meditations. It hath almost lost the relish of the studious thoughts of God, or Christ, or salvation.

6 In gifts or parts, which through too much indulgence to carnall ease or affectation of worldly greatnesse or defect of fit imployment, may like a  
sharpe

sharpe sword, grow rusty, or like standing waters in a poole, be almost drawne dry and empty.

*Simile.*

7 But which is the mainest and worst of all, the Christian may be dying in his very graces; as the health of man may admit of eclipses, and the very life of man may admit of sowings and faintings, so the very graces in a Christian may be much checked and wounded, and impaired in their ancient degrees and acts.

Partly through want of exercise, partly by not administering succour & strength unto them by a constant application of the ordinances, partly by  
hearkning

hearkning unto some sinfull temptations.

So that now repentance may become more difficult and unable, and godly sorrow can scarce be discerned for that extreame hardnesse of heart, and faith can scarce finde the way, or make any use of Christ, and the promises, but the gates of unbeliefe seeme to possesse the soule.

Yea, the feare of God may now not so restraine and awe, and the love of God may not so prevaile and excite, as they have done in former times.

*But you will demand what may be the causes of this dying condition?*

*Object.*

I

*Sol.*

I conjecture these.

*Simile.*

1 Some deadly corruption which hath seized upon their spirits: if poyson get into the body, it works upon the spirits, and so weakens and indangers life.

The people of God are sometimes tasting of poyson, they are tampering with unsound doctrines, which as they doe infect the judgement, so they doe abate their spirituall principles and abilities. The Apostle was afraid that he had lost his labour, and spent himselfe in vaine to those of *Galatia*, that they were even leaving their hold in Christ, and what was the cause of it? Surely some false

false Apostles had leavened them with error about circumcision, and the observation of the law. When the judgement is corrupted with any error, then truths are not of that power with the soule, & where truth looseth in authority, there grace will loose in its strength and efficacie.

2 Some deadly wound is given unto them; you know that a man may dye, not onely by a draught of poyson, but likewise by the cut of a sword, which divides the parts, and lets out the blood that carries and preserves the life of man.

*Simile.*

There are things which doe fight against the soule, 1 Pet. 2. 1 ?

1 Pet. 2.  
11.

C

and

and not onely fight against it, but wound it; nay not the soule and conscience onely, but likewise our very graces.

Sinnings doe not onely prove a troublesome wound to the conscience, but likewise a killing and dying wound to our graces; if any thing in the world extinguisheth or abateth our graces, they are our sinnings, which are to graces as water to the fire. But now even the people of God doe many times hearken to some baser lusts and viler commissions (as you know in *David* and others) and when sinne hath got any favour in the judgement or affection, it is like a disease which will not  
off

off without a manifest breach of health and strength; sinne lames our graces.

*Simile.*

3 Some deadly neglect; if the soule grow negligent, it will quickly grow dying, as you shall see that inordinate abstinence and neglect of food brings a man quickly into a consumption: so when the people of God through spirituall pride, shall grow carelesse of vitall assistances, that they keepe not so close to the word of life, nor to the Sacraments of life, nor to the great principle of life by an earnest and constant communion in prayer, no marvell if they grow dying persons. It is with us in respect of God, as it is

*Simile.*

C 2

with

*Grace is  
not a life  
and  
strength  
it selfe.  
Minuit  
supra vi-  
res ali-  
menti  
penuria,  
said Fer-  
nelius, l. 1  
de morb.  
causis.*

*Simile.*

with the plants in respect of the sunne, which live or dye, flourish or decay upon their conjunction (if I may so speake) and neereneesse with its heat.

So our soules, yea and our graces live by that conjunction which they have with God; if we keepe not to him close and neere, but draw off, what doe we but draw off from the principle of our being and conservation?

4 Inconsiderate toleration of particular evils; not a timely expurgation of them.

You know that if peccant humours redound in the body, and be not considered of, and purged out in time, they may of ordinary



ordinary distempers, turne into deadly diseases, and so it is with particular corruptions (admit they be such as wee are pleased favourably to call infirmities) or any other sinnes, if they be not quickly expelled and reformed, they may bring us neere the gates of death: one sinne may bring on another, or the same sinne may steale unto a strange degree of strength, so that a person (unawares) is languished extreamely, and whence comes this? not onely from an inconsiderate admission of sinnes, but also from an untimely correction of sinne.

The soule should presently have physicked it selfe with,

C3

first,

first, a right apprehension of the greatnesse of the evill in the beginning: secondly, speedy humiliation before the Lord: thirdly, fervent supplication for mercy, and more strength: fourthly, resolute reformation and abandoning of it.

But the neglect of these hath brought the soule into a spirituall languor, and perhaps into a deep consumption of graces.

5 Defect of frequent examinations: though at our originall and first conviction of sinne, and a sinfull condition, we are very tender and circumspect, and ever and anon feared, and overlooked our spirituall conditions, whereby we found singular

gular additions to our graces, yet after a while, after Christians have got over the pangs of the first birth, and have procured more peace and comfort, (as if a gracious soul would thrive of it selfe) they are generally apt to keepe on the course of obedience, but thinke it superfluous, at least not so necessary, often to search, and view, and fan-  
now themselves. And what now befalls them? surely two great evils, *viz.* that the estate and operation, and acts of sin, are not so strictly eyed: secondly, that the estate of their graces is not so well knowne and guarded against speciall motions and temptations, whereup-

on it often fals out that the poor soul is reduced to great streights and leannesse, the man cannot pray as heretofore, nor finde that love to God and Christ as heretofore, nor have that delight in the ordinances, nor doe that good in society, nor receive that profit, nor feele that mournfulnesse of spirit as heretofore: why? hee did let and suffer his spirituall estate to run on at hazards, and the lesse searching of heart, the lesse strength of grace alwaies.

6 Defect of solemne humiliations in extraordinary fasting and prayer. Those meanes which beget our graces, are likewise ordained to preserve them,

them, and as the use of singular meanes confers more power and life to our graces, so a cessation in the use of them, proves an exceeding decay unto them: it is as if you should take away the pillars from the house, or the raine from the earth.

Now this is certaine, that extraordinary times of fasting and prayer, they have beene blest with power from heaven to make the strongest temptation and corruption to flye, no sinne is able to stand before them: and so likewise they have been blest with an answer of singular enlargement & addition to our spirituall estate: oh how cheerfully, how tenderfully, how much  
more

more fully and fruitfully is thy soule inabled after those duties rightly performed? but Christians grow very strangers to these solemne duties, either totally omitting of them, or slubberlie performance of them, and therefore they get not that strength over spirituall corruptions, nor that fruitfull supply to their graces, and consequently slip into dangerous languishings and decayings.

7 Inactivity in our places and relations, is another cause of spirituall languishing and decaying. A lazy Christian will quickly prove a dying Christian: the Physitians doe observe, that as too violent exercise overthroweth

*Simile.*

throweth health, so likewise too much rest may cause extreame sicknesse, because therein the superfluous humours are not carried or breathed away, and the spirits and naturall heat are not stirred up to performe their proper functions.

It is even so with Christians, in respect of their graces; if they let them lye still and dead, they will quickly grow weake and dying; though their life be implanted by an operation of Gods spirit, yet it is preserved by an operation of our spirits; therefore grace is compared to fire which must be stirred up and blowne: He who will not use grace, will quickly lose it, or decay in it. But

But Christians many times imploy not their graces, they do not any good with them, they doe not stir up their hearts to beleewe, to lay hold on God, to call upon him, to walke before him, they doe not lay out their knowledge, their zeale, their love, &c. in their particular relations; but live together, and do no good together, meet together, and provoke not one another unto further holinesse.

*V. Fernel, l. 1. de  
morb,  
causis  
cap. 18,  
p. 198.*

8 Lastly, all perturbations or excesse in passions, cause a languishing, and therefore they observe in nature, that immoderate feare, or griefe, or anger, or joy, or agony (which consists of anger and feare) or desire or care;  
all



all these, or any of these by their immoderation, doe checke the spirit & naturall heat, *immarefcere spiritus & calorem*, and consequently diminish health and strength. And surely so it is in the spirituall condition; all inordinate affections are the empayers of grace, whether it bee desires of the world, or delights in it, or fears of men, or griefe for losses, &c. but I cannot now inlarge.

I now come to the application of this point, which shall be in the first place, to reflect upon our owne hearts, to see in what condition our spirituall condition is; whether we be not Sardians, yea or not, either having a  
name

*yp.*

name onely, but are totally dead; or if we doe live, whether that life of ours be not growne so weake, that wee are almost dying.

Reasons to move you to search your hearts in this particular, are these.

*Three  
things.*

1 Many among you (who professe and have a name, and I hope, the truth also of grace) doe not get on, you doe not make progresse, you have not advanced your selves in your spirituall condition.

Though the Lord hath given you plentifull and rich meanes, yet what you were many yeers agoe, the same you are now : a man may say of you, as we doe  
of

of our friends, whom wee see perhaps once in ten yeeres, that they looke, and are just as wee found and left them then. So many of you, after many yeeres preaching and hearing, are just as you were, have not attained to any further perfection in holinesse.

Now it is an ill symptome, this; for a staying heart is seldom otherwise then a decaying heart. Creation, though perfect at once, yet it is not so with sanctification; the old saying is, *Non progredi est regredi*, grace is either getting or losing, like a river, either fuller or lesser, or like an oake, growing or dying.

*Simile.*

2 Many

2 Many persons expresse palpable decayings; all who know them, can see and say, how strangely they are altered; they are scarcely knowne now to be Christians, but by the judgement of the most favourable charity, who formerly have beene very forward even to exemplarity. The judgements of men are so altered with fond opinions, their strictnesse of conversation is so strangely slack'd into that which they themselves were wont to call a licentiousnesse of walking, there is such a dumbnesse growne in their families, and withall there is such a chilnesse come upon their affections; oh where is that

that thy former zeale, and love, and joy, and pittie, and brokennesse of heart, and flames for Christ, and desires of strength and assurance, and circumspection to please thy God?

3 Though we be not dead Christians; yet if we be dying Christians, it makes our condition very evill, and very sad.

1 Very evill, no man can decay in good, but by something that is bad; it is alwaies some sinfull evill, which makes us to wither in spirituall good.

*Evill.  
i Cas-  
sally.*

And then it is a thing very evill in it selfe; if it be a sinne not to thrive in grace, it must be a greater sinne to be dying in grace.

*2 For-  
mally.*

D

And

3 *Eventually.*

And then it occasions much sinne, for it were a wonder to see a man dying in grace, and not withall, living in sinne; however, beleeve it, that sinnes will live the more strongly in thee, by how much the more weakely grace doth live in thee; when naturall heat growes low, then doe diseases multiply and grow high, if that which should keep downe sinne, be kept downe by sinning, how exceedingly sinfull maiest thou prove?

2 Very sad: the Christian condition is excessively perplexed and prejudiced by it, *v. gr.*

7 *Effects of it.*  
*Simile.*

1 There is an extenuation of our chiefest excellencies: our gold

gold is now clipt and washed :  
Beloved, we have not more re-  
all excellencies here on earth,  
then gracious and holy quali-  
ties. If the naked soule be more  
worth then a whole world,  
what is grace, the which high-  
ly elevates and advanceth the  
soule ? But even our graces (in a  
decaying condition) are droop-  
ing and pining : for a man to  
have a finger withering is no-  
thing to that as to have his  
heart consuming : to behold a  
candle put out, what is that, to  
behold the Sunne growing dim  
or purblind ?

When graces decay, then that  
which is as the heart to the  
members, or as the Sunne to the

*To lose  
an house,  
a friend,  
&c. but*

D 2

the

the earth, or as the soule to the body, a vitall spring, decayeth: as she said about the taking away of the Arke, that we may say of diminution in grace. Now the glory is departing from *Israel*, now thy honour is lying in the dust; the lesse good thou growest, the more vile thou becommest, it is as if thy faire hand should become leprous, or thy sunne set at noon day.

2 It is a depression of our heavenly strength; when *Sampsons* haire was off, he was then as other men; he lost his haire, and lost his strength too.

*Simile.*

When the fountaines are low, and roots weake, then the streames



streames prove thinne, and branches grow almost fruitlesse, for these are the principles of being, and of assistance unto them.

Our graces are a kinde of Springs to our gracious abilities; when we be lesse good, we shall alwaies doe the lesse good, and the more evill. Thy wheels will move slowly, and thy feet (like those of a sicke man) will move staggeringly and wearily; there will be much adoe to doe a little good: thy services will be like the thinne rayes of gold, which can hardly be discerned for the multitude of ashes and drosse.

Now this is a sad thing,  
D 3                      when

when at the most, it is the most that a man can doe to beleeve, or to grieve for sinne, or to love God and feare him, or to pray unto him, whereas heretofore he was able to beleeve and rejoyce, to mourne and lament, &c.

3 A dampe upon our communions with G O D; there is a double communion.

One is direct, which is our active communion with God, another is reflexive, which is Gods gracious communion with us: now by a dying in our spirituall conditions, there ariseth a cloud and a dampe upon this reciprocall communion.

We

Wee cannot so behave our selves to God, and God will not so behave himselfe to us, as in former daies.

*Note.*

1 For our communion with God, it will grow more strange, lesse confident, and more gainlesse, small for heart, lesser for trust, and least of all for benefit and successe.

2 For Gods communion with us, it will be eclipsed both in the effective and assisting part of it, as also in the affective and comforting part of it: hee will not give thee his hand or his eye as formerly; *David* found (upon his great decay) not onely a cloud in Gods face, but also a strangenesse in Gods spirit,

*Psal. 51.*

*Psal.* 51. 12. We doe by our notorious decaying, debarre our selves of much help from God, and of all manifesting favour for the present.

Desertion is ever the consequent of decaying.

4 A vexation and restlesnesse in the conscience; when we take our leave of grace, wee must take our leave of peace and comfort. A dead man (many times) rests in peace, but a dying Christian is never without trouble; the remaining grace serves most to trouble us for our decayings in grace.

Spirituell comfort usually attends us, either upon great griefes for sinne, or upon great  
progresses

progresses in duties. And spirituall troubles usually follow us, either upon great adventurings in sin, or upon great remissions in holinesse; for conscience will trouble us as well for loosing what is good, as for committing what is evill.

5 A great silence in heaven: the decaying Christian shall either heare of much displeasure from God, or little and no good from him.

The ordinances (to which he now more perfunctorily applies himselfe) shall either bee dumb and speake no encouragement, or bitter, and speake no strength or peace.

His prayers (which now are  
more

more cold and formall) shall either have no answer, or else the answer is more feare and trouble in spirit; God seemes to have no minde to speake unto that man, who now hath scarce any minde to speake unto his God.

6 A strange suspition of the reality of a spirituall condition; if grace be often put in dispute when the Christian cannot perceive it to thrive, how much more questionable will it be, when the same Christian perceiveth it to abate and decay, (usually it must be more then meere grace which must assure us of grace) forasmuch as nothing resembles hypocrisie  
more

more then to be formall in our duties, and with it to be withering in our dispositions.

A dying Christian looks very like to a dead hypocrite.

7 To all these may be added other evils, as horrid temptations, externall miseries, feares of death, &c. but I may not insist on every thing.

*Q But here it is demanded, how may we know whether wee be in a dying condition or not.*

*A.* I know no better way to discern this, then by a just comparison of things present with things past, as also by a faithfull observation of our owne spirits and graces: thus then,

I Look,

1 Looke, first, upon your judgement and mindings, 2 upon your wils and affections, 3 upon your hearts and consciences, 4 upon your worship and services, 5 upon your waies and conversations, so may you discern whether you be dying or not:

1 For your judgements and mindes, formerly in these there were strong endeavours to know the truths of God, and to search out the mysteries of salvation, and admirable apprehensions of holinesse and Gods favour, and sweet meditations on the will of God; the minde was eminently taken up with God and Christ, and grace and obedience



obedience and heaven.

Is it so now? or rather doe not worldly things seeme great in our eyes, are not our mindings more for inferiour good, then for spirituall good? divine studies, are they not rare, and poore, and transient glancings? where is that study to know God, or to see his favour in Christ unto thee? where is that reverend regard of the truths of God? where is that diligence to know the estate of thy soule? where is that sweet delight thou tookest once to know Iesus Christ as thine?

2 For your wils and affections: time was, that thy will was a flexible will, easie to obedience,

ence, submissive to the divine will, cheerefull in the duties of godlinesse, much closing with divine promises, ravished with love to Christ, fearefull to offend, carefull to please, desirous of nothing more then Gods loving kindenesse, strictly hating all evill, joyfull in this alone, that God was thy portion; fouds of teares swelled thy grieve, heavenly delights satisfied thy soule, mercies were blest, threatnings feared, &c. If instead of these, thy will growes weary and surly, hard to be perswaded, often clattering with the divine will, impatient of strict obedience, indifferent to please, slow to hearken to  
the

the counsels of God, and the mercies of God, and the threats of God are of small efficacie; sin is not so watched and loathed, God alone is not so delightfull and sufficient, thy heart grows more insensible of sinne, and hardly mournfull, thy delights are lesse in heavenly things. Ah now, how is the mighty fallen, how is the noble plant degenerated? &c.

3 For your hearts and consciences, compare them now with what formerly they were; how quicke was conscience to direct, how apt was conscience to checke, how tender was conscience to offend? how unquiet was conscience till peace was

was made, how exact was conscience to obey?

Is it so now? thou canst sin, and conscience strikes not; God strikes thee, but conscience strikes thee not; conscience strikes thee, and thou carest not; conscience is growne sleepey and drowfie, almost dead and seared; thou canst omit duties, or performe them carelessly, slip and fall, and lie; and either conscience saith nothing, or thou reformatest nothing.

4 And for thy worship and service of God, how pretious were the ordinances unto thee, how delightfull? thou hadst rather have spent a day with them,

them, then a hundred daies in other employments : what secret impressions made the power of them upon thy heart, what griefes, what joyes, what degrees of perswasion, what expectations of hope, what furtherance unto holy duties, what conflictings with, and conquests over sinne and temptations, what more serious care and diligence to walke with God.

Oh why is it, whence is it, that now it is not as once it was? there is not that connaturalnesse as formerly, the word works not on thee as formerly, the Sacrament works not on thee as formerly: the word of  
E threat-

threatning reveales wrath, and thou tremblest not; the word of promise reveales goodnesse, and thou lovest it not; fidelity, and thou beleevest it not: the Sacrament opens the bloud of a Saviour, and thou thirstest not, thou rejoycest not; thou art growne dull under all, and barren after all; thy dead heart argueth that thou art a dying soule.

§ The same may be said for our conversation and wayes, if they be now dead in respect of sinfulnessse, or dead in respect of unprofitablenessse, that wee are now become as the Heath that brings forth nothing, or as the Briar which brings forth  
thornes,

thornes, that we turne all religion into a discourse or censure, or dispute; we can eat and drink, and talke, and sinne: how have the shadowes of death covered us? how chill and languishing are our graces turned?

Well, seriously consider of these things (you who heare me this day) and looke to it that you be not a dying people: more fearefull would your condition be, then the condition of others: for, first, you have more enlivening meanes then any people on the earth; no City like unto you for publike offers, or for private opportunities; yee are even exalted unto heaven in the abundance and

E 2

choyce

choyce of spirituall he'pes, and therefore your decayings would have more in the account then other mens; the more meanes of strength and life (accidentally) make dying diseases to be the more deadly.

2 Wee cannot but approve your flocking to the word and service of God in season and out of season, as if you would take the kingdome of heaven by force; if now under so faire a complexion you should be in a consumption, that the vitals of godlinesse should slacke and pine away in your hearts and private walkings, this dissonancie would be not only shamefull to your profession, but also uncomfortable



comfortable to your conscience.

2. Againe, another way persons may discern whether they be dying and decaying.

By an observation of the acts or operations of their graces; as if they be faint and more inconstant: you see that the root is lesse able, when but a little fruit appeares on the tree, and that the Spring is fallen when the streames scarce runne, which yet were wont to flow; when graces are scarce active, or are uneven in their generall actings, surely there is some spirituall languor in thee.

*Simile.*

O Christian, thy faith doth not commit things to God as heretofore, and thy love is not

E 3

so

*Simile.*

so settled on Christ as heretofore, and thy patience cannot beare in any measure as heretofore, and thy sorrow is dry, and thy zeale is cooled, &c. If thy eye cannot see so well, but growes darker, and thy foot cannot goe so well, but growes lamer, and thy shoulders cannot beare so well, but grow weaker, it is an argument that naturall vigour is decaied. The same may be said for our spirituall condition, if graces exert not themselves in a former vigour, &c.

*Note.*

I pray you to observe that graces are given unto us for three ends and uses.

1. To be inclining principles to gracious or holy acts.

2. To be enlarging principles

to pious performances.

3 To be cleansing & opposing principles of sinful corruptions.

1 They are inclining principles to gracious acts : the nature of man without grace, is like a dead man, who hath no disposition to walke, but when grace comes into the soule, it doth enliven it, and inable it, and incline or dispose it unto holy operations, to minde, to will, to desire, to doe heavenly works, as you see in Saint Paul, when converted, that renewing grace enclined him quite to another way, and to other acts, to pray, to preach Christ, &c.

Now where is that ancient disposition in thee unto good

E A

duties?

duties? whence is that wonderfull unwilling esse and unco-wardlinesse of spirit in thee? how comes it to passe, that if thou dost serve the Lord, it is as if it were of constraint, there is a kinde of aversenesse and hanging backe; thou dost not minde him in any measure, and his law is not in thy heart.

2. Againe, they are enlarging principles, they do not onely enable a man to good performances for the matter, but also for the manner; they make us a willing people in the day of our offerings, and to delight to doe the will of God, and to be glad in going to the house of the Lord.

But

But now there is not that relish of godlinesse, there is not delightfulness of service, there is not that libertie and alacrity of spirit; thou art become a dull and heavy Christian, as if there were not that suteableness betwixt thy heart and holy duties, thou art growne very slothfull and carelesse, and negligent in thy worke.

3 Lastly, they are cleansing and opposing principles of corruptions, therefore compared to water which washeth out the spots, and to fire which fetcheth off the rust; and as our corrupt flesh is said to lust against the spirit, so the renewed spirit is said to lust against the flesh,

flesh, and they are contrary one to the other, still in opposition and conflict.

And so the time hath beene, that thou hast found it, that grace did humble and cleanse thy heart from the love of sinne, and raised tender feare about it, and singular hatred and opposition of it; yea, the very thoughts of sinne were an heavy burden to thee; how often (by reason of the rebellion in nature) hast thou cryed out with Saint Paul, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me, &c.*

Is it thus now, why is it not thus now? is sinne quite subdued, or thinkest thou that grace  
and

and sinne will ever be at truce ?  
nay, but why dost thou suffer  
those contemplative evils to  
lodge in thy minde, or those de-  
lightfull imaginations to tickle  
and invegle thy affections ? nay,  
how darest thou to be tamper-  
ing with acts, if not sinfull, yet  
doubtfull, and as like sins as can  
be, and which occasion sinne ?  
yea, and sins prevaile much on  
thee, as pride, vanitie, &c. and  
under all this thy heart smites  
thee not, restrainesthee not; the  
time hath beene, thou durst not  
have beene or done this for a  
world, &c.

*But if the case be so (may some  
tender conscience reply) then I feare  
my estate is not right, for I never  
had*

*Object.*

bad so much adoe with a sinfull nature all my life, as of late dries, and if the greater power of sinne shewes the more weakened estate of grace, I am then the person in a dying condition.

Sol.

To this I answer briefly.

1 You must distinguish betwixt the turbulency of sinne, and the prevalency of sinne; the spirituall condition is not decaying, because sinne is more molesting and rebelling, but because sinne is more prevailing and leading.

2 Betweene sinne in conflict, and sinne in subjection; my grace is weakened when I yeeld to sinne, but it stands in strength when it stands in defiance



ance and conflict with sinne : it argues the violence of sinne to breake out againſt grace, and alſo it argues the potency of grace to keepe the ſoule from ſerving unruly and boysterous luſts.

3 Betwixt sinne in temptation, and sinne in the affection, even a ſtrong caſtle may be aſſaulted, and a ſtout Chriſtian much tempted, then the ſpiritual part is weakened, when ſin is favoured : If as there is much temptation in thy ſinfull fleſh, ſo there is much deteſtation on thy ſpiritual part, thy bow yet abides in ſtrength.

*But another Chriſtian replies,* *Object.*  
*if theſe ſigns of decaying be right,*  
*which*

which you deliver, then surely I am in a dying frame; for heretofore when (as I thought) God looked on me in mercy, in quickening me from the dead, I had a very melting heart for sinne, and a surpassing y zealous love to God and his glory; but now I finde no such height, and flames, and measures?

Sol.

To this I answer,

1 You must distinguish betwixt equall sensiblenesse, and equall spiritualnesse; upon the inchoation of grace, there may be more sensiblenesse, for as much as grace erects it selfe much in the affections (of whose acts we are more apprehensive, being more neere to sense) but upon the advance in grace,

grace, there may be more spiritualnesse: though not such a sensible grieve in the affection, yet a pure lothing of sinne and displicence with our selves in the will.

2 Betwixt passionate expressions, and deliberate or judicious expressions; I confesse that heretofore thy zeale and love might be more passionate and violent, but now they worke upon more pure and mixt grounds, and for ever know, it argues the grace to be the more strong, which can act its parts with lesse turbulency and unquietnesse.

3 Betwixt grace generally diffused, and it particularly employed:

employed: at the first all the water ranne as it were in one channel; grace exerted it selfe mostly in the humbling part, and therefore seemed to be very much, because very much employed in a particular, but upon further knowledge of Christian duties, grace diffuseth its strength to all the acts of holinesse, it is not the lesse, because the more improved, one'y it is the lesse perceived; as health and strength are when totally diffused over the whole body.

*Simile.*

4 Betwixt interruption and corruption, spirituall principles may sometimes be interrupted (like a river which yet is scrambling over the bay) by temptations:

*Simile.*

tions: the passages are not alwaies so open for operation: the very ineptitude of a mans temper, may occasion unequal expressions of the visible act: *actus Imperati*: and yet there may be no weakening and decaying in the spirituall condition; for the invisible frame, *actus elicit*, are sure and full still; the will and desires doe act as much as ever, though the tongue or hand cannot render it, and besides this, the worke is made up by a secret humbling, which is so unavoydably hindred from an open acting.

6 But lastly, if upon solid grounds, when wee are our selves, we finde a manifest ine-

F                      quality

quality of our present, with our former condition in grace; then counsell is better for thee then comfort, and mee thinkes no better advile can be prescribed, then that of Christ himselfe to the Ephesian Church, flaking in her first love; *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first works.*

Use 2.

If though upon perusall of these trials, you finde yourselves not to be in a dying condition.

1 Then first blesse the arme of the Almighty God, who hath given grace, and upheld it.

2 Beseech him for ever to preserve and increase thy spirituall qualities all thy daies; it is by

by his goodnesse that thou art good, and of his strength that yet thou abidest in thy strength.

3 Use all the meanes thou canst to keepe up thy graces, that thou sink not into a dying condition. Meanes to preserve us from a dying condition be these.

1 Be humble: the high tide quickly ebbes, and the highest sunne is presently declining: faith is the champion for our graces, and feare the watchman, and humility the nurse. Spirituall pride fills our fancies, but impaires our graces: now a man thinkes he hath enough, and then he is sure to lose much; if any thing keepes us from  
F 2 being

*Simile;*

being low in grace, it is this, that we still grow low and poor in spirit. In the Rickets they have large heads, but weake feet, so, &c.

2 Pet. 3.  
17. 18.

2 Strive for further perfection in holinesse, 2 Pet. 3. 17. the most of what wee have, is but the least of that we want: He that will not strive to be better, will be worse; in temporals we should insist more on our receipts, and that will make us thankfull: in spirituals wee should insist more on our wants, and that will make us fruitfull, 2 Pet. 1. 5. *Adde to your faith, vertue, and to vertue knowledge, 6 v. and to knowledge temperance, &c. 8 v. for if thou doe these*



these things, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitfull, &c.

3 Quit all formality in all holy duties, take heed of the first coolings: much impiety may hang upon much indifferency: a coole spirit is alwaies a losing spirit: he who gives way to do duties in a slight manner, will after a while be able scarce to performe them in any manner. But as the rule was *Hoc age*, so still keep up thy spirit with the duty; stir up thy graces in all duties, put out thy heart and strength in holy actions of praying and hearing, and that will keepe thee alive in grace.

A conscionable and cordiall

F 3

acting

Christ's counsell to his

acti<sup>ng</sup> of good is blessed, not  
onely with a preservation of  
grace, but likewise with an ad-  
dition and increase.

4 Maintaine an holy jealou-  
sie and feare of decaying; *Bles-  
sed is the man w<sup>ho</sup> feareth alwaies,*  
*saith Salomon, Prov. 28.*

Three things arise from this.

One is tender watchfulnesse  
against all decaying occasions.

Another is frequent search  
and examination of our spirits  
and estates.

Quicke repairings of all fay-  
lings: all which preserve us  
from a notorious decaying or  
dying.

5 Be prudently serious in  
christian society; spend not thy  
hours

houres in vaine disputes, lest while thou studiest odde notions, thou in the meane time lo-  
sest precious grace.

There are disputes which end onely in division, and there are inquiries which tend to edification; rather studie to make thy selfe better, then to prove another to be bad.

6 Keep up uprightnesse, and by no meanes away with hypocrisie, say not the sinne is little, for many a man hath dyed of a little wound, and we all know that the small end of the wedge makes way for the greater; nor say, it is secret, a man may dye of a secret stab, as well as of an open wound:

*Simile.*

F 4

When

When the children of the Prophets tasted of the pottage, they cried out *Mors in olla*, death is in the pot, and so shall wee finde upon experience, that there goes a dying influence with every sinne.

Therefore take heed of all sinning, especially of those against knowledge and conscience, these are *peccata vulnerantia & devastantia*, wounding and wasting sinnes. The tender heart and the upright, these are the living and the lively hearts.

7 I might adde, that we must apply our selves to a living Christ, and to living ordinances, &c. but these alledged rules shall suffice for this time.

But

*But suppose wee are in a dying condition, what meanes now?* *Object.*

1 Finde out the speciall diseases or causes of thy decaying, in what grace most, and by what meanes, and waies, and acts. *Sol.*

2 Be lowly humbled; that thou hast so humbled and abased thy glory; Thou shouldest grieve exceedingly, that by thy great decayings, God hath been so much dishonoured, his spirit grieved, religion shamed, conscience wounded, and grace impaired.

3 Then use the meanes prescribed here in the Text, *strengthen the things which remaine, that are ready to dye; whence wee come.*

come to the next proposition,  
*viz.*

*Dott.*

That spirituals, if languishing and dying, are to be strengthened.

For the understanding of this assertion, premise with mee a few particulars,

1 That there is a difference betwixt the  
 Implantation, } of holy principles.  
 Perfecting, }  
 Strengthening }

The Implantation of them is nothing but their free and effectuell communication unto a person from Gods holy spirit; his hand alone sets all these heavenly plants; and from his sole goodnesse and power are all those

those starres, those shining and beautifull stars, created in our soules.

Perfecting of holy principles, is nothing but a successive addition unto grace received, a rising or sprouting of those plants, a going on from a weaker, to a stronger degree.

The strengthening of them differs from both, for it is not a new creation of holy principles, but a restoration of them, and so it differs from grace implanted, and though it be an addition to grace received, yet this addition is not to grace as meerely weake, but properly to grace as weakened, and so it differs from the perfecting  
of

of holy principles.

2 The strengthening of decaying principles or habits of grace, it is a spirituall and proportionable reparation of them unto their former liberty, and ability, and efficacie.

*Simile.*

It is not a meere sustaining of them in *genere gratiarum*, or in *esse vitali*, that they shall not quite extinguish; as when a house is onely so kept, that it falls not to the ground, this is not sufficient to sustaining; for graces may be strengthened as radicall habits, when yet they may be pining in their vigour, and remitted in their measure and gradualls.

But strengthening of grace,  
imports



imports addition as well as sustentation, like recovery which is health in some measure coming and rising againe.

*Simile.*

Nor is all regaining sufficient, unlesse it be proportionable to the estate of grace when it began to decay & sink: when the decayed Christian recovers againe unto that ancient pitch of heavenly power and inclination, and unto his old liberty of holy acts, whether inward in the minde, will and affection, or outward in his open and visible duties; now hath he rightly strengthened himselfe.

It is true, that before he fully recovers that equall pitch, hee may be said to strengthen his  
graces

graces by way of disposition, but punctually by way of habit; the strengthening implyes a new equality as it were to the latitude of his former condition.

*A three-  
fold  
strength.*

3 There is a threefold strengthening of decaying principles of holinesse.

1 One is by way of authority and plaine causality; this strengthening is the worke of the spirit of Christ Iesus; for as he onely is life to a dead man, so he onely is medicine to a sicke soule; his bloud is the onely comforting medicine to a troubled conscience, and his spirit is the onely strengthening medicine to a decayed Christian.

*It*

It is he who must set us upon our legs againe, and who must make our withered branches to flourish againe.

Now Christ Iesus doth strengthen the languished Christian (as I suppose) three waies.

*Christ  
streng-  
thens  
three  
waies.*

1 *Excitando*, by awakening him out of his drowsie and deadly sleepe, like thole to *Ionah*, *what meanest thou O sleeper? arise*; so doth Iesus Christ awaken the decaying Christian, partly, *per sermonem sonantem*, by the powerfull knockings of the word, which will not let him rest thus, but charge on him all the wrath of God, and the with-drawments of his love, if hee will continue thus.

Partly,

Partly, *per sermonem tonantem*, by some singular afflictions, and neere corrections, scourging of him in some singular outward mercies, that hee may see his spirituall losses in temporary ones.

Partly, *per sermonem pulsantem*, by his owne spirit, clearing the eyes of his understanding, to open and reflect, and consider on the decayed condition, as also by exciting the conscience bitterly, to accuse and judge him for this reciduation and witherings, with much torment, feare, and shame.

2 *Adjuvando*, by conferring on him actuall and efficacious strength (*specialem concursum ro-*

*bur*

Alvarez  
de aux.  
Gr. disp.  
88. p.  
698.

*bur aetuale*) whereby his will resolves to forsake those courses of death, and to turne backe againe into the pathes of life, and is also inabled by that helping grace, both to bewaile its former decayings, and also earnestly and constantly to supplicate the throne of grace and mercy for pardon, and for strength to recover.

3 *Renovando*, by a daily infusing (in the use of meanes) such new measures and degrees of holinesse, untill the decayed Christian recovers his former ability and vigour, shaking off his corruptions, and attaining unto that strength of holy understanding, faith, will, love,  
G
desire,

desire, teare, care, obedience, as heretofore.

2 Another, is by way of ministry and office: this concerns the Pastors of flockes, who should consider the estate of their sheepe, and if they finde any to wander, to reduce them into the way of truth; if any to be weake, to beare them up in their armes with comfort, if any to be pining and decaying, to stirre them up by holy reproofes and pious counsels and directions for all the waies of a speedy and safe recovery; and many interpreters thinke this the principall strengthening meant and intended in this place.

3 A third by way of personal duty, and so the decaying Christian strengthens himself, when being awakened, and excited, and assisted by the Spirit of Christ, he applies himself unto, and continueth in the use of all holy and raising meanes, whether private or publicke, or both, untill God againe strengthens what he hath wrought in him.

This strengthening is partly Privative in the expulsion of those diseases and occasions which have impaired the spirituall condition.

Positive, in a continuall succouring of the spirituall condition, till it recovers to its ancient

G 2

degree

degree and station.

*Quest.*

*But why must the spirituall condition be thus strengthened?*

*Sol.*

Reasons hercof are many.

1 Spirituall decaies are exceeding losses, therefore to be repaired and strengthened: they are a losse

In that which is oure excellency; holinesse is the glory of a God, and the dignity of a Christian; it is holinesse which makes thee to differ from men, more then reason makes thee to differ from beasts: If with him in the Gospel thou shouldest lose thy sheep, or with her in the Gospel, thou shouldest lose thy goat, thou wouldest seeke to recover them: how much more when thy



thy crowne is losing? &c.

In that which is our safety :  
graces are not onely *ornamenta*,  
beautifull garments, but *munimenta*,  
powerfull weapons :  
thou lovest thy weapons in the  
very field before thine enemies :  
if thou lovest thy spirituals, and  
makest thy selfe naked, so that  
any temptation may insult over  
thee and wound thee : at least  
thou canst not so well wield  
and use thy weapons : a broken  
arme what can it doe, especially  
with a dull weapon, against  
strong and skilfull adversaries ?

*Simile.*

In that which is our serenity:  
the weakened grace, and the  
wounded conscience still goe  
together : or if not, then it is the

G 3

dying

dying grace, and the dead conscience, which is farre worse then the other.

In that which is our felicity :  
ah unhappy Christian, who  
when thy bow abode in  
strength, couldest see a loving  
God, enjoy a gracious Father,  
couldest speake to him much,  
and heare from him much; but  
now hast changed thy confidence  
into feares, thy sunne into  
darkenesse, thy communion  
into strangenesse, thy glory into  
shame.

2 Who knowes what the  
end will be, if thou strengthen  
not thy decaying graces? The  
Lord knowes how farre thou  
maiest fall, if thou wilt not  
thinke

thinke of rising.

Thou seest how poore a crop of duties comes from thy decaying graces: thou feelest thy affections almost gone: thou apprehendest not only a weaknesse, but a wearinesse in holy services: thou findest thy appetite gone from the word, thou knowest thy neglect of many a Sacrament: thou canst not but observe a vanity to arise in thy minde, in stead of heavenly purity, and a more delightfull consociation with vaine and idle persons, then with solid and fruitfull Christians.

Yea and since thy graces have beene weakened, easie temptations have beene very likely (if

G 4

not

*Simile.*

not altogether) effectually to in-  
 snare thee to great transgressi-  
 ons: from many omissions thou  
 art now ready for great com-  
 missions; so that like a stone  
 running downe a hill, or a man  
 carried further and further into  
 the sea, thou doest indanger  
 (what in thee lies) the very  
 soule and salvation of thy selfe;  
 and the love of God is it not let-  
 ting? are not his frowns rising?

And here will be work now  
 made for that miserable soule  
 of thine, which hath so farre  
 gone from home, and is depar-  
 ted from thy fathers house?

3 We are bound to keep our  
 graces in repaire, and more then  
 so, *ergo*, we are not to rest in a  
 decaying

decaying estate, but to recover,  
&c.

As the Tenant who takes an  
house is bound to keepe it in  
repaire, that it may be habitable  
against winde and weather, so  
must we keepe up the graces  
given unto us, and not let them  
sinke at all.

*Simile.*

Nay more then so, wee are  
bound against not onely decay-  
ings, but against meere stand-  
ings: wee must proceed from  
faith to faith, we must perfect  
holinesse in the feare of God, we  
must grow in the love and  
knowledge of our Lord Iesus,  
we must abound in all the fruits  
of righteousness, we must use  
and increase our talents, it will  
not

not be an answer of prooffe, to  
retaine our naked talent, and  
say, Master, there is thine own.

*Vse.*

The first use of this point  
shall bee to stire us up to the  
practise of this duty. I will not  
spend time to demonstrate that  
we need strengthening. I may  
speake my conscience with  
grief, that generally we are a de-  
caying people, in the powers of  
godlinesse, and flames of holy  
affections, yea our own consci-  
ences secretly testifie against us  
this day, that so it is; yea, the  
judgements of God, the fire of  
his wrath which begins to burn  
and flye abroad in this City yet  
again, testifies as much: and  
therefore my exhortation to us  
all,

all, is, that we wilely consider of our dyings and decayings : ah ! if the Plague should breake into our dwellings, and take us away in our decayed estates, a tormenting sore, and a tormenting conscience, a dying spirit, and a dying body, both at once, the Lord knowes the wofulnesse of such a condition. There are onely three things which I shall commend unto you for the application of this, *viz.*

- 1 The motives to excite us.
  - 2 The meanes to perform it.
  - 3 The manner of doing it.
- 1 The motives,

*Three  
things.*

To excite us to strengthen our spirituall condition, shall be drawne from the disadvantages in a weakned, & the advantages

*Seven  
disad-  
vantages.*

tages

tages of a strengthened conditiō.

1 In<sup>r</sup> respect of duties, the Christian man is to be Gods workman; he is the servant of the Lord, who imposeth on him not a few, but many workes, not easie, but (many times) difficult workes, not for a while, but constant workes, such duties, that a little knowledge wil not serve the turn, nor a little wisdom, nor a little faith, nor a little patience, &c. some of these duties are active, some passive, some respecting his general, some his particular calling, some of relation to God, some to man, some to himselfe. Now the weakened Christian, hee is no body to the strengthened Christian



Christian for duties, for every man is, as his strength is, and our actions (for the course of them) are as the ability of the soule is from whence they come.

The weakened Christian comes very short of the other, both for

His adaptation of spirit unto duty, there is not that connaturalnesse (if I may so speake) of his spirit to spirituall offices; duties come hardly from him, like a rusty key to open a doore; hee doth his worke with a more indisposed spirit, not freely, but like a sicke man, he goes very little, and is quickly weary, and poorely, not fully, whereas the strengthened

*Simile.*

strengthened, Christians duties flow from him as from an easie principle, and lively and quick cause.

His adequation of duty to the rule; He doth not minde the rule of holy actions so much, nor doth hee proportion his workes to the commands, God may command much more then he doth, for ordinarily the decayed Christian is guilty of many omissions.

Hee failes wonderfully oft-times in passing over the duty of prayer, or reading, or hearing, &c. But the strengthened Christian, he is for all duties, difficult as well as easie, private as well as publique, though hee cannot inten-

intensively answer<sup>r</sup> the rule for duty, yet extensively hee doth; knowingly and willingly hee omits no duty.

His affective cooperation with duty: hee doth duty, but without such co-working affections, more formally; he doth pray and heare perhaps, but it is coldly and sleepily, it is not as *id est* *id est*, but as if it were some indifferent worke, he acts with a carelesse and indifferent spirit. His eye is not so full on Gods glory, nor is his heart so warme in prayer, &c. His coles of fire burne in a cold hearth: He is not lively in living works, but performeth spirituall works without much spiritualnesse.

But

But the strengthened Christian hath workings in his workes, or as in *Ezekiel*, there was a wheele within a wheele; he serves the Lord with a fervent spirit, and with all his soul; hee is exceeding glad to obey, and is much grieved that he can obey the Lord no better.

Acceptation of duty : the Lord doth not looke so upon his offerings, as on the duties of a strengthened Christian : it is true, that the Lord doth not despise the day of small things, even weake services are graciously respected by him, but when Christians weaken their owne operations, they doe weaken also Gods acceptations, for

for the Lord is pleased differently to answer his servants according to their different dispositions and tempers; faint seekers have but faint answers, and resolute petitioners get plenti-  
full answers from him of good.

2 In respect of the ordinances, here also the weakened Christian is very short of the strengthened Christian, both

For preparation unto them, his heart is not put in such a frame to come and converse with God, he will not take that paines before he comes to the word, hee doth not by precedent meditations and prayers, bring such a receptivity and teachablenesse of heart to

H the

the word; nor for the Sacrament: perhaps he comes and thrusts on the worke, but retires not himselfe, examines not himselfe, humbles not himselfe, hungers not, thirsts not, nor considers his particular necessities, so rightly to dispose his soule for an holy communion with God, but is more full of carnall indulgence to himselfe, and study rather for apologies to excuse his neglect, then by preparative duties to fit himselfe:

For application of them, hee stands under the ordinances with more distractions, with lesse attentions, with an unclosing spirit; the word workes  
not

not so on his heart, nor his heart on the word. He stands under the ordinances with a more distracting spirit, or else with a more fearing spirit, lest the Lord will finde him out for his revoltings, and either hee dares not come to the Sacrament, or if he doth, hee is not able for his life almost to be confident and perswaded of Gods love towards him in Christ.

For fructification, he buyes not at the market, suckes not, and thrives not by the breasts, nor makes that use of them as the other doth; nor doth hee improve them so to the benefit of his spirituall condition, as

H 2

the

the other doth, the counsels, commands, exhortations, reproofes, promises, they are generally to him in his weakened estate, as water on the rock, or as the waves to *Jonah* sleeping in the ship, they have not that *virtutem moventem*, that authority over his drowsie spirit.

But the strengthened Christian hath farre more easie passages, the word and Sacrament have their sweet and facile impressions, on his understanding, will, and affections: by discoveries of sinne, and threatnings, he feares the Lord, and hates sinne more. By discoveries of goodnesse and mercy,  
and



and Christ, his faith gets more, and his love riseth more. By discoveries of duties, and commands, his cares and desires abound more in him; they are still humbling, or still purging, still raising, or still upholding of him, he is more and more built up and edified in his holy faith, his communions with God are more cordiall, and more beneficiall: there is still a fuller and sweeter conjunction betwixt his soule and Christ.

3 In respect of corruptions, which are the very bane and poyson, and shame of his soule, and sore woundings and impairings; the weakened Christian is found much underfoot,

H;

and

and is more in bondage, and lesse sensible of it: gray haire appeare more on him, unruly lusts get more head againe, and he either hardly feels them, or faintly resists them: He is now become as a wounded man, over whom every coward can insult.

The strength of tender perception of sinne failes, and the strength of resolute opposition, and the strength of frequent conquest, so that his soule is much imbased by lusts, his resistance are either,

1 None:

2 Or faint.

3 Or fruitlesse.

But he is overborne by the  
tide,

tide, more easily, like an unskilfull rowe, or a sicke man by a thrust.

But it is otherwise with the strengthened Christian, who now can leade captivity captive: he is mighty in prayer, and resolute in defiances, and generally happy either in making sinfull motions to flye, or in preserving his soule from yeelding unto them; either hee is more quiet, or lesse guilty: He is a greater enemy to sinne, a surer conquerour, and still a lesser servant.

4 In respect of conversation, it is true that the Christian must be gold without, and gold within; hee must be like the  
H4 heavens,

heavens, excellent in substance, and beautifull in appearance; a good heart is not enough, but also a good life and walking, like a Spring which is for common good, and not for private. But the weakened Christian in his conversation, falls short of the others, who is strengthened in many respects, v. g.

*Simile.*

For strictnesse, though it be a kinde of garment, yet it hangs more loosely, and like one of the Planets; though a starre in heaven, yet sometimes nearer, sometimes more distant from the equinoctiall. There is not that exact conscionablenesse in holy walkings, but a sordid complying many times with

with the acts and waies of unworthy societies, or at least his graces are out-dared, and overawed, so that when hee should expresse them for Gods glory, he is afraid to speake or worke,

2 For profitablenesse: every good man should be like a tree, on which, one may gather fruit; he is to be a steward of the manifold gifts, not inclosing, but imploying of them for the benefit of others: his boxe of oyntment should be opened: If thou be good, thou art bound also to doe good, for graces are given not onely to make us good, but also to make us to doe good; but thus it is not with the decaying Christian.

stian. He being now fallen into a penurious stocke of grace, hath almost lost the art and skill of profitablenesse, his acts seeme rather to be those of civility, then piety, he may be as facetious, but is not so religious in conversings; his discourses are more censorious and insolent, then substantiall and edifying: I confesse that some Christians cannot so draw out their treasure, through a bashfulnesse of spirit, but he is growne lesse active, because lesse able; his barrennesse is in the cause, and not in the instrument.

So that he may eat and drink with others, but no good comes from him; his lips preserve

serve not knowledge, nor doth his communication administer grace to the hearer: whence it followes, 1 That God hath little or no glory by him: 2 That the Saints have little or no delight in him: 3 That his conscience hath little or no comfort in it selfe.

3 For cleernesse, his river is not so sweet, but ever and anon it proves brackish; his sunne, though it runs its course, yet it is frequently clouded, so is it with his life, he is not doing of good so, but withall ever and anon, he is doing of some evill: his weakened graces cannot beare him up against strong occasions and temptations: his gold

*Simile.*

gold lies much in the ashes, and like a lame man, he is not only halting in his best motion, but ever and anone quite downe, the snuffe gets above his candle.

4 For delightfulnesse, hee is almost a stranger to exact Christians, and doth not honour them so much as formerly, but secretly feares their company, and judgement; he is perhaps more ashamed, or e'se more afraid of them: his conscience is yet so apprehensive, that hee interprets every glance as a secret checke of his decayings. Thus is it not with the strengthened Christian, whose graces are high, carefulnesse great, usefulness large, godlinesse even,



even, and \* great delights taken up amongst the best and choicest Christians. Hee himselſe ſtill growes better, and others by him.

§ In reſpect of conſolation : the declining ſunne creates the longer and darker ſhadowes, and the decaying Chriſtian brings on himſelſe either the ſharper terrors, or deeper griefs, the ſicke bed is full of paines ; neither his owne ſpirit, nor Gods Spirit ſpeake peace unto him. He who of bad begins to be good, may have much tranquility ; but he who of good becomes leſſe good, ever becomes more undelightfull to God, and moſt unquiet with himſelſe.

The

*Pſal. 116.*  
1.

*Simile.*

The ship which goes out in low ebbes, fals foulest on the sands, so Christians who ebbe in graces, shall alwaies flow with sorrowes.

But it is otherwise with the strengthened Christian, for rising graces breed stronger comforts and longer; there is not onely no troubling accusation, but a most surpassing excusation in conscience; he hath a better heart, and shall therefore finde a more quiet spirit, for conscience speakes peace answerable to our being more good, and doing of it. Alas, that thou shouldest still walke like a *Benoni*, a childe of sorrow, whereas the other Christian lives

lives like a *Barnabas*, a sonne of consolation.

6 In respect of affliction : the weakened in active graces, is ever most weake in passive duties : generally hee hath more crosses, and (of himselfe) lesse wisdom and strength to bear them ; because hee is growne worse, therefore his afflictions are increased, and because his abilities are sunke, therefore the afflictions crush and prick him much the more.

*Sampson* who could easily breake thorow many cords, and barres, yet when weakened, a few *Philistines* were too hard for him.

He cannot be so patient, nor  
yet

yet so confident, nor yet so diligent in a suffering condition.

His weakened graces can neither administer strength, nor yet subdue those workings of impatience, so that he is almost funke and split with calamities, his decayed ship can scarce abide any foule weather.

But when personall sicknesses come, and the apprehension of death (at which times his conscience is thoroughly wakened) ah how bitter, how terrible are the thoughts and disputes of his heart at such a time, much like those of him who apprehends his condition not to be good.

Oh how the pulses of his  
disturbing

disturbing and disturbed conscience worke? what reflexions on his former waies? what comparison of his former flourishing, with present decayings? what feares of approaching before the Lord? what smart sentences on himselfe, what sudden and vehement exclamations? Oh Lord! (saith he) I would not yet dye, I am fallen much from my God: Lord, spare me a little, that I may recover my strength (my decayed strength) before I go hence, and shall be no more seene.

It is not so with the strengthened Christian, but as in active duties, hee is more forward, so in passive duties he is

I more

more sufficient; in losses, in crosses, yea in death it selfe hee is more submissive and confident; he can (with *Iob*) be as willing to receive evill at the hand of God as good, and doth not only rejoyce in his favours, but in his strokes, and is as ready to go to his father, as to serve God his good master.

7 In respect of Gods manifestation; the Lord is pleased diversly to manifest himselfe to his people, sometimes in admirable motions and suggestions of his spirit, sometimes in more quick excitations of their spirits, sometimes in singular confirmation of them with assistances for extraordinary works; some-  
times

times by secret impressions of his favour and love upon their consciences, which doth revive their hearts as wine, and satisfie their soules as with marrow, so *David* speakes, *Psal.* 63. But now the weakened Christian, he darkens this heaven over his head, he hath not that comfortable sight of God, that assurance of his favour, that joy of the holy Ghost; *David* lost the joy of the spirit, and the voyce of gladnesse; the arme of God is not so revealed in him for doing of good, nor the face of God so open unto him at all.

*Psal.* 51.

Whereas the strengthened Christian findes it otherwise, he hath a better heart, and a  
I 2 fairer.

fairer day; his communion is sweet with the Lord; hee still seeks the Lord, and often findes him, enjoyes him in his power, and enjoyes him in his gratioufnesse; the Lord meets him that worketh righteoufnesse, and remembers him who remembers the Lord in their waies.

Now thinke on these things (O thou fallen and decayed Christian) and rest not in thy weakenesse, but recover and strengthen thy spirituals againe.

*Three  
things.*

Three things I will let fall, which perhaps may fetch and quicken thee againe.

1 Though thou art far sunk, yet thou maiest be raised againe.

2 If thou doest rise againe, the  
Lord



Lord will graciously pardon thy decaies.

3 If *thou* wilt set upon the strengthening worke, the Lord will worke in thee sufficient strength.

1 Thou maiest be raised and strengthened againe, and that may appeare thus unto thee.

1 Repentance is possible for any sinnes which are committed, and if renewed repentance be possible, then a recovery againe is possible, for as much as our recovery again consists very much in a renewed repentance.

2 Yea and we have examples of weakened Christians, strengthened againe, as we know in *David*, exceedingly wounded,  
I 3 . . . but

but yet recovered, and Peter grievously falling, but graciously rising againe.

2 If thou doest strengthen thy condition, the Lord will mercifully pardon thy former decayings: I confesse that there may be sore grounds of feare to intangle and depresse the spirit of a decayed Christian, for his sins (by which he hath decayed) may perhaps be hainous for the kinde, and also high for the circumstances, being against knowledg, against the workings of conscience, against the workings of his graces, against the tender love of God in Christ, shewed to him more then to another, so that his heart may strongly misgive him, whether

the Lord will ever looke upon him more, and accept of him into favour. But this I say, that be thy decayings what they will, either for the matter of them, or causes of them, or circumstances of them; if thou doest rise againe by a renewed repentance, I assure thee that the Lord will pardon thee, and accept of thee in Christ; looke, as the Lord pardons all the sinnes of thy unconverted condition upon thy initiall repentance, so he will pardon all the sinnes of thy converted condition, upon renewed repentance, and therefore hee calls upon backsliding and declining people to returne unto him, and promiseth both

Hof. 14.  
4.

Mic. 7.  
18.

to heale them, *Hof. 14. 4.* and to love them freely (*ibid.*) which is as much as to pardon them, but see the pardon exprefly, *Mic. 7. 8.* *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paffeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, &c.*

3 If thou wilt fet upon the strengthening work, the Lord will worke in thee fufficient strength for the worke. There is a difference betwixt a man in his conversion, there indeed he is without all strength, hee can doe nothing; and the Christian in his reftauration, there is now fome living ability in him, which can yet doe a little, act a little, ftrove a little, at leaft in bewailings

wailings and desires. Now if thou doest in any sincere degree set upon the right and full meanes of thy recovery, the Lord God will come in with his owne strength. Hee will strengthen what hee hath wrought in thee, and will work the will and the deed in thee, his own works in thee.

*But then you will reply, what meanes may a decayed Christian use to recover and strengthen himselfe againe?*

I conjecture that the best course is this.

1 A serious consideration of their condition; this is the counsell which Christ gave to the Church of *Epheſus* (decaying in her

*Object.*

*Sol.*

*Seaven  
Meanes*

*Revel. 2*

her first love) Remember from whence thou art fallen; seriously consider, take to heart, peruse and judge over thy estate, what it was formerly, what it is now; what strength then, what weaknes now, how much glory God had then, what dishonour God hath now; what good thou diddest then, what evil thou doest now; what peace in conscience then, what woundings in conscience now; what estimation among the Saints then, what strengthening of the hands, and opening of the mouthes of the wicked now?

And this is an excellent meanes to worke upon thy spirit, or rather to worke of thy spirit;

spirit; *David* considered his wayes, and turned his feet to Gods testimonies.

*Psal. 119*

2 A deep humiliation which will follow upon this; thou must breake through all busineses, and pleasures, and impediments, and retire thy selfe in a more solemne manner, (more then once or twice) and set thy selfe before the Lord, and fall down before his footstoole with shame and confusion of face, with bitter weepings and lamentations, with sound judgings and condemnations of thy selfe.

Ah, how thou shouldest exquisitely afflict thy soule, that thou shouldest be so mad and vile,

vile to lose a God, to lose any thing of the graces of a God, for a sinnes sake, or a worlds sake.

That the Lord should shew thee more love then another, and intrust thee with grace (the least dram whereof is more precious then all the world) and yet thou shouldest decline from the Lord, not answer this trust, not use those talents which have yeelded so much profit and comfort, being improved, but decay in them, and fall behinde hand, yea even under mighty meanes of strength alwaies continued unto thee; and these things should cut and grieve, and afflict, and humble thy soul exceedingly.



3 A solid resolution: thou must with full purpose of heart resolve not to rest in thy decayed condition, but to shake off all the causes and occasions of thy decayings.

If any wickednesse hath got into thy heart, thou must put it farre away from thy tabernacles, and if the morsels have beene sweet, thou must cast them out with godly sorrow as bitter as gall and wormwood.

If carelesnesse and slothfulnessse of spirit hath caused thy decayings, thou must (with the Church in the *Canticles*) stand no longer upon, how shall I rise and put on my coat? but rise thou must, and get out of thy sloth-

slothfull bed, and thrust from thee a neglecting and negligent disposition.

Or if the world hath caused thy decayings, either in the profits of it and gaine, or in the honours of it and respects, or in the friendship of it and acquaintance, thou must resolve to bid them all farewell. Think on it O Christian, what gets he for profit, who loseth in his graces, or for honour, who abaseth himselfe in his graces, or for love, who loseth himselfe in the favour of his God? Ah poore soule, thou mayest curse the day that ever thou knewest what did belong to thy drudgings in the world, and unto thy great friends

friends in the world, and thy  
society with such and such per-  
sons: at first thou didst converse  
with them with a regretting  
spirit, then with a silent spirit,  
then with an yeelding spirit;  
many, many a day hast thou  
come home with conscience  
accusing and smiting of thee,  
unto which hadst thou heark-  
ned, thou hadst been much pre-  
served: well, well, if ever thou  
wouldest recover thy spirituall  
strength, thou must perempto-  
rily resolve on it to sever from  
wicked society, better farre to  
be a poore man, and a rich  
Christian, then to thrive any  
way, and bee decaying in  
grace.

4 An active reformation :  
*Remember (said Christ) from  
whence thou art fallen, and doe thy  
first workes :* so say I now, goe to  
thy old workes againe, be tra-  
ding for thy soule, set up prayer  
againe, and reading againe, and  
hearing againe, and holy medi-  
tation and conference againe,  
and solemne humiliations a-  
gain, stir up those coales and  
cinders of grace; there is life yet  
in thee, oh act thy life, faith  
can doe something for thee,  
though it cannot see comfort  
for thee, yet it can see helpe and  
strength for thee; godly sorrow  
can mourne little, set it to work,  
perhaps it may quickly rise to a  
floud upon particular surveyes,  
and so set repentance on work,  
yea,

yea, and all thy soul, thy minde, thy judgement, thy memory, thy affections to worke in all the duties of thy generall and particular condition.

5 Ardent supplication, for it is the Lord who must shew this power in thy weakenesse, *Psal. 86. O turn unto me and have mercy upon me, give thy strength unto thy servant:* Beseech him to pittie thee, beseech him to succour and helpe thee, to be thy strength and thy salvation; to beat downe and weaken the sinnes which have so much weakened thee, to crucifie thy heart to the world, which hath so much crucified thy heart unto thy God. To breath upon

K

thy

*Psal. 86.  
16.*

thy graces as hee did upon the dry bones, to stirre up and revive them by his Almighty spirit, to put his hand of power, upon thy hand of weakenesse, as the Prophet did upon the Kings, &c.

Yea, and never give him over till then, that though thou hast beene a backsliding childe, yet hee is a gracious Father; though thou hast been unfruitfull, yet hee is faithfull; though thou art weakened, yet he is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, who can give power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he can increase strength.

*Esay 40.*  
28.

Yea,

Yea, and that yet there is something of his owne in thee, though very little, yet something, and that holinesse which he did once implant by a mighty hand, he is now as able to revive and strengthen it by his Almighty power.

6 Carefull application: now goe to the healing and strengthening waters; thou hast knowne the waies of God, and his goings in the Sanctuary, how he hath wrought wonders for the dead, many a Cripple hath got strength there, and many a disconsolate soule hath found comfort there, in his word and in his Sacrament, there hath his arme beene re-  
K 2 vealed;

vealed; *David* grew (by his great sinnings) into great languishings; but the Lord sent *Nathan* the Prophet unto him, and his faithfull dealing was a meanes of his happy renewing. What we pull downe by hearkning to the voyce of sinne, that may be built up againe by hearkening to the voyce of Gods spirit. But then this must thou doe, if ever thou wouldest be strengthened, *viz.*

Strive for a plain and pliable heart which may yeeld subjection to whatsoever law or course the Lord shal direct thee unto by his word; if the word offer thee a restoring plaister, but thou wilt not apply it, and  
 prescribe

*As the  
 Jewes in  
 Ieremiab*



prescribe unto thee strengthening methods, but thou wilt not follow them, now thy heart may grow more hardened, but thy graces will never be strengthened.

But this doe, strive to yeeld up thy soule in an humble subjection to the heavenly ordinances, that if they say forbear, thy heart answers I will forbear; if they say doe, thy heart answers, I desire to doe thy will. Cooperate with the word received, when it hath got into thy soule, and stirred thee in any kinde, when thou perceivest any healing vertue gone from Christ by it unto thee; oh blesse the Lord, and get home,

K 3

worke

work it againe upon thy soule by holy meditation, yea and yet againe by holy petition.

*Simile.*

Thou must even doe in this kinde, as *Benbadads* servants did in another, they watched the words which fell from the King of *Israel*, and improved them, so must thou watch what motions the Lord puts into thy heart in private, and cherish them, watch what impressions the Lord makes upon thy spirit by his word, and not onely excite thy heart to embrace them, but work them often and often upon thy conscience, and this is the way to make thy weake sparke to grow unto a flame.

7 And

7 And lastly, there must be lively consociation by a naturall instinct, the weaker things doe cling and winde up themselves by the stronger, as the weake Ivie upon the strong Oake: so thou must inwardly and affectionately joyne thy selfe with strong and lively Christians, who skill the waies of grace, and walke in them, who are good, and know how to doe good, who have hearts to pittie thee, heads to direct thee, and armes to beare thee up.

Thou maiest exceedingly be repaired by their heavenly wisdom in counselling of thee, and kept in by their tender

watchings over thee, and put forward by their daily exhortations of thee, and refreshed by their seasonable comfortings of thee, and led on by their strict and lively examples, yea even stirred up by the observation of those blessed experiences which thou perceivest in them, through a carefull communion with God, as also much assisted by the successe of their prayers for thy particular condition.

Thirdly, the manner.

*5 Particular.*

Now be pleased to heare a little for the manner, how yee are to set upon this strengthening work, and then I have done with this proposition.

*If*

If thou findest thy selfe to be a weakened Christian, then set upon thy strengthening worke.

1 Presently: *Initia morborum cavenda*, say the Physitians, and therefore their rule is, *principiis obsta, &c.* we should set upon diseases, as soone as diseases set upon us, not trifle away the methods of recovery: three things must be lookt into in time, tides, seasons, diseases.

If wee presently oppose our decayings,

First, we shall prevent the deadlinesse of diseases; hadst thou opposed thy negligent, carelesse spirit at the first, thou hadst not now been bleeding  
under

under so many wounds, thou hadst not stepped downe from one sinne to another, thou hadst not gone so desperately from the Lord.

Therefore watch thy heart, and often examine it, weekly, nay, daily; thy languishings are by this manner sooner espied, and sooner staied.

Secondly, our strengthening will hereby become more easie; it is easier to fetch a man from the brink, then from the depth of the channell, and for a Physician to cure a distemper, then to heale a disease.

There is usually in the first impairings, lesse corruption, and more strength of grace to oppose

oppose it and subdue it; Beleeve it, long decayings are the more uncomfortable and more difficult for recovery: Therefore if thou fallest suddenly, rise quickly; remember one thing, it is a very dangerous thing to suffer the soule to habituate it selfe to decayings, all customes are hardly broken.

2 Voluntarily; it is true, that though thou decaiest more and more, yet the Lord may awaken thee at length and recover thee, but doe not put the Lord to it. The Physitian may perhaps heale a deeply languishing patient, but it will cost the patient dearly and bitterly. *Ioab* got little by not comming to *Ab-salom*,

*salom*, for he at length fetcht him by setting his corne on fire; if thou wilt not come in of thy owne accord, but stand it out, I tell thee the Lord will fetch thee in indeed, but he will send a whirlewinde after thee, as to *Elijah*, or a tempest after thee, as to *Ionah*, he will send flames into thy conscience, if thou wilt needs put him upon compulsory waies.

Nay, but rather peruse thy decayings thy selfe, and arraign thy selfe and judge thy selfe, and afflict thy selfe, and hyc thee to make thy peace, and to recover strength; it argues the better heart to fall unwillingly; but willingly to rise, hereby peace  
is



is sooner made, and strength sooner restored.

3 Prudently, when a tree is withering, you need not poure buckets on every branch, if you water the roots, it is as if you watered all. There is an holy part in recovering our graces againe, if you can recover the roots, you have hit the way to renew all. Now there are two radicall graces (as it were) if they be strengthened, all the rest will come to be strengthened, *viz.*

1 Faith, this is a root grace, and this is a strengthening grace, it is of singular power with God, and with Christ, and with the spirit of God: It is that  
grace

grace which laies hold on, and applies all our strengthening helps, so that it deales at the springs of strength, and brings away strength from them.

But this is not all, faith is no sooner strengthened to lay hold on our strength, but (like those common officials in nature, the stomach, liver, heart, and brain) it imparts this vigour to all the new man: every grace gets when faith gets, the more a man can beleeeve, the more will that man grieve for sinne, the more will he feare to sinne, the more will hee hate sinne, the more will hee repent of sinne, the more carefull will hee be to walke before God, the more  
tender

tender and conscientious will  
hee grow in duties, the more a-  
ble unto praier and the ordi-  
nances, and the more succeffe-  
full under them.

Therefore deale prudently  
for thy strengthening: when an  
house is declining, we doe not  
meddle with every rafter and  
piece of wood; no, but wee  
strengthen the pillers and foun-  
dation; faith is the pillar (as it  
were) of our graces; strengthen  
it to more apprehension, appli-  
cation, to more submission to  
the wil of God, to more affiance,  
to more dependance on God  
through the bloud of Christ,  
and faith, will both finde out  
thy strength, and impart it. *I*

*can*

*Simile.*

*can doe all things through Christ  
that strengthens me.*

2 Love, this is another radical grace, not that it brings forth other graces for their habits, but onely that it eggeth on other graces to their acts and operations, for as holy love is a most active quality in it selfe, so it doth make the Christian to be most active; it is a doing thing, and makes the person to be doing.

More fully thus.

2 Cor. 5.

i There is activitie flowing from love; grace shall never be idle; where the love of God is strong, the love of Christ constraines me, saith Saint Paul, it is like the vertuous woman  
in

in the last of the *Proverbs*, who did set all her handmaids to employment, for love will finde duty enough, for it is never quiet but in doing the will of God.

2 There is diligence: It will not set graces to a naked work, but to a diligent worke, even carefully and diligently to expresse their acts, to take all the seasons of holy actings, strictly to oppose and resist corruptions, neatly to set out duties, so as God may have most glory.

3 There is delightfulnessse, it makes our communion with God, pleasant, and the works of piety easie to the soule: and the more delightfull and easie any acts are, the more frequent they

L

grow;

*Psal. 84.*

grow; *David* loving of the Lord, was glad when they said, let us goe unto the house of the Lord, and he had a desire even to dwell and rest there, as the birds did, *Psal. 84.*

Now put all this together, and you shall see that if love be strengthened, all our spirituall estate will be strengthened, for it makes our graces to be active and doing, to be carefull and exact in doing, to be delightfull and cheerefull in doing good, and in communion with God, and all these are admirable meanes to raise and strengthen graces.

Forasmuch as the more any Christian doth, the more hee

may

may, by using his spirituall strength, he alwaies increaseth it, and also wit.

All know, that diligence in acting is a thrifty course; *the diligent hand makes rich*, saith *Salomon*, so the diligent Christian is the gaining Christian; and that delightfull frequency of acting, it is like the twisting of a cord, which comes thereby to be the stronger: No Christian is so able in the habits of grace, as hee who is conscientiously frequent in the practise or exercise of grace.

*Simile.*

4 Seriously and in good earnest, and not slightly and faintly; the recovery of a faint soule will never be effected by faint

L 2

work-

*Simile.*

workings: gentle phylicke is improper for tough diseases: you did fall into your decayed estate by remissive operations or actings, and thinke you that what was not able to keep up your graces from sinking, can now quicken and raise them, being greatly funke.

If my hands cannot keep a swooning person from falling to the ground, can they lift him up being fallen? whereas every heavy body, the farther it descendeth, the heavier it is.

No, no, Christian thou deceivest thy selfe, to thinke that a few complaints, or a few sighes, or a few teares, or a prayer (once in a quarter of a yeere)

more



more earnestly pressed, will serve the turne.

I tell thee that thy wounds are deepe, and thy diseases are strong, thou art deeply revolted from the Lord, the very foundations are shaken and battered within thy soule.

What talkest thou of putting a soft cloth over thy stinking and festred wounds of sinfull corruption; thou oughtest to search deeply, and to cut off the dead flesh, lest the whole be gangrened.

Take my advise, even breake up the fallow ground, I meane thy hollow heart, search and try it to the utmost, not by slight, but by deep and full humiliations

miliations and supplications, make thy peace; not by common, but by extraordinary performances seeke to renue thy selfe.

Thy fals have beene great, and therefore thy worke must not be slight; great sinnings require grand sorrowings, and low fallings, the more industry for higher risings; therefore act thy strengthening part with all thy strength, and as it were for thy very life; remember that *David* was in fasting, and *Peter* in bitter teares for their falling, and so they rose againe.

5 Thoroughly and to some purpose; doe not begin a strengthening worke, and then either  
upon

upon the motions of a lasie heart, or a fearefull heart, or an unbeleeving heart, be discouraged, and desist: this inconstancy would keepe thee in an everlasting infirmity, just as if a Patient should follow the prescription of the Physitian for a day or two, but afterwards finding that to be somewhat painefull and troublesome, hee will bee bound no longer, but then hee falls ill againe. So if thou set upon the waies of strengthening, and a while thou wilt keepe close to praying and hearing, and humbling, and reforming, but perceiving the workes to be painefull and offensive to thy corrupt heart, and too strict to

*Simile.*

L 4

thy

thy licentious heart, or the fruits of them to be hopelesse to thy unbeleeving heart, (I cannot hold out, all is in vaine, or to little purpose) I tell thee that thou doest but play the foole with thy soule, set it forward and backward; this were to twist and untwist *Penelope's* threed; thou never wilt get any thing by an inconstant and weary spirit.

But this must thou doe, if thou wouldest recover thy strength indeed, thou must never admit of interruptions, thou must never break off thy renewing worke, till thou hast got to thy former station in grace againe.

The

The worke must bee a daily worke, a constant going on in mourning, praying, &c. till thou hast got thy tender conscience againe, till thou hast gotten thy broken heart againe, till thou hast got thy more willingly and cheerefully obedient heart againe, till thou hast recovered thy first love; and canst doe thy first works againe.

*It is true, thou shalt meet with many temptations from Satan, with many contrary suggestions from thine owne spirit, and with many discouragements from the world, and it is true also that thy doings may not at every time equall or be like to it selfe; thou mayest feele thy pphysicke at one time to worke better then*

*Object.*

*then at another; sometimes thou mayest doe thy strengthening worke with more strength, sometimes with lesse; sometimes with more liberty of spirit, sometimes with lesse, sometimes with more comfort, sometime with lesse.*

*Sol.*

Yet let nothing discourage thee, or take off thy spirit from the worke, but follow on to know the Lord and his strength, against all temptations, against all suggestions, against all discouragements, against all thine owne feares and feelings, and inequality of operations, yet give not over; but,

Keep up thy services still, retain frequent communion with God still, be begging still for the strength

strength of Iesus Christ to raise thee, heare still, use the prescriptions till health comes, thou art in the way, and must not rest till thou hast obtained.

If thou breakest off before thou hast regained thy strength, thou wilt fall backe againe, and also lose all thy new endeavours for thy recovery in grace.

Thus much for the second proposition, I proceed now to the third, of which I can but give a touch, lest I be hindred in the prosecution of the matter in the next verse.

*I have not found thy works perfect, &c.*

That the estate though visibly faire to the eyes of men, yet  
it

*Thirdly.*

it may be really imperfect in the eyes of God. Amongst the Churches, *Sardis* had a name that it lived, but with God it had not that name and estimation.

Wee Christians have the judgement of charity, but God hath the judgement of infallibility: we looke onely on the skin and surface of actions, but God looks into the hearts and spirits of persons: wee judge of the heart by the actions, but God judgeth of our estates by the heart.

Now the outward acts (upon severall arguments, and for severall ends and inducements, may be extreamely different from



from the inward habit and disposition. Persons for their credits sake, and for their peculiar advantages, may draw out acts naturally good, when yet their spirits stand not right, either for principles or ends of those acts: so that notwithstanding al their profession, their estate may bee imperfect before God: partly,

For the frame and constitution of soule,

For the vigour and fulnesse of acting.

For the scope and intentions in performing.

For the mixtures in matters of faith or conversation.

But I cannot now inlarge in this singular affection.

Onely

*Use 1.*

Onely it may teach us above all, to looke unto our spirituals, as they abide in, and flow from our hearts and soules, upon which principally the Lord lookes: he searcheth the hearts and reynes, and approveth the actings of the heart, more then of the hand, and therefore wee reade, that he had first respect unto *Abel*, and then unto his offering.

2 To study Gods approbation more than mans; it is not sufficient nor safe, that either wee alone judge our estates to bee good, or that men judge them to be so, unlesse the Lord findes them to be so: every Christian is that as God judgeth him to be,

be, and he stands or falls according to this righteous judgement of the al-seeing, and al-knowing God. And so I take leave of that verse, and proceed to the next.

*Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent.* *Revel. 3. 3.*

In these words you have the other branches of the spirits speciall directions to the Church of Sardis, which are three, *viz.*

- 1 Remembrance, (*remember therefore how thou hast received and heard,*) *Three branches.*
- 2 Persistence, (*and hold fast,*)
- 3 Renewed repentance, (*and repent.*)

Briefly

Briefly to open the words.

Remember) sometimes the word is taken for the act of a particular faculty of the ratiōnall soule, which is called by the Philosophers, *Reminiscentia*, and then it is the calling backe of a thing, or object formerly knowne and laid up in the memory.

Sometimes it is taken for the act of serious consideration appertaining to the judicious faculty of the soule, wherein apprehended truths are well weighed, throughly thought on or considered of, in both respects I conjecture, it may bee taken in this place

How) some reade that word rather

rather thus, *via* what, remem-  
ber .i. call to minde and consi-  
der what thou hast received  
and heard, as if it were a word  
declaring the matter, but rather  
in this place it imports the  
manner, and therefore it is well  
translated, *ut*, How, noting  
the manner how Christ taught,  
and prescribed them at the first,  
and also the manner how they  
embraced those holy rules of  
his for doctrine & conversation

*Thou hast received and heard,*)  
that is, assented unto, and em-  
braced those truths and directi-  
ons of Christ, where is expres-  
sed: first, their ancient subjec-  
tion or embracing of the do-  
ctrine of Christ (*received,*)  
and secondly, the meanes

M

or

or way thereof, *viz.* by hearing,  
(*and heard*)

I cannot possibly with any profit insist on all the observables out of these and the other words, considering that little part of time which remaines for me to worke amongst you, only I will point at three singular propositions, *viz.*

*Three  
propo-  
sitions.*

1 That holy truths once received, are often to be remembered and thought on, (*Remember, &c.*)

2 That acceptance of truths is not enough, but Christians must adde thereto a persistence in truths, (*holdfast*)

3 That renewed repentance is required of Christians, as well  
as

as initiall (*and repent.*)

You see that all these propositions naturally flow from the text, and are very proper for us, and for the occasion upon which they are handled, I begin with the first of them, *viz.*

That holy truths once received, are often to be remembred and thought on.

*Doct.*

There are three things which should fall into a frequent consideration :

1 Our former sinnes, and this will keepe us humble.

2 Gods former mercies, and this will make us thankfull.

3 Received truths, and this will make us dutifull and fruitfull.

M 2

The

Dent.

6.8.

Pro. 6.

21.

Eccl. 12.

11.

Psal 119

15.

The Iewes were to binde them as frontlets between their eyes, *Dent. 6. 8.* to which Salomon alludes in *Pro. 6. 21.* binde them continually upon thy heart, and tye them about thy necke, and *Eccl. 12. 11.* they are to be as nailes fastened. Looke on David, and this was his praetise, *Psal. 119.* I will meditate in thy statutes, there once, then reade verse 23. thy servant did meditate in thy statutes, there is the second time, but then reade verse 48. I will meditate in thy statutes, there is the third time; what speake I of once or twice, or thrice; see him in verse 97. *Oh how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day.* The Apostles are frequent in



in their exhortations to this purpose, to remember, to lay up, to keepe in minde, not to forget the holy doctrines delivered by them, nay, and Christ pressed the same also upon themselves upon many occasions. But for the cleere opening of this proposition, premise with me these particulars.

1 The frequent remembring of former truths must be a remembrance by way of subiection, and not by way of contradiction; we must not remember them and question them, much lesse abuse and pervert them, least of all oppose and despise them.

2 The remembrance must  
M<sub>3</sub> be

be ingenuous, and not preiudiciall; though we must sticke to, yet not in the truths received, our former remembrance, must not contract a present or future neglect of any other truths which God shall reveale unto us, as when many remember the Sermons of dead men, and slight the discoveries of the living.

3 There is a threefold remembrance of former truths.

*Simile.*

One is notionall, which is like the often looking into a glasse, or when a person beholds truths as hee doth pictures, gaze on them, and that is all.

Another is verball, when a person

person renews his acquaintance and complements with truth onely: his memory onely loades his tongue, like a naked Astro- nomer who knowes heaven, and can onely talke of it.

A third is practicall, when the remembrance is like a cloud descending on the plants, or like a fire felt as well as seene, this kinde of remembrance hath three degrees in it, for it is partly,

*Simile.*

Directive, when truths remembred are made a compasse for us to sayle by, or copies for us to write after, still teaching and guiding us how to draw the lines and letters of our conversation.

M 4

Affective,

Affective, when truths remembered are like the conference of Christ (rising from the dead) burning and inflaming of our hearts with most affectionate love unto them.

Effective, when truths remembered, are truths obeyed; we often consider former doctrines, and still better our present conversations.

After this practicall forme, are wee to remember received truths.

4 There is,

1 A materiall remembrance, which is partly of the things themselves, partly of the revelation of them, partly of the manner and meanes of revealing them.

2 For-

2 Formall remembrance of truths received, which is rather of the manner how wee our selves did receive them; we are often to thinke on truths received, not onely as they stand in proposition or revelation, but also how they stood with us when wee did receive them for energy or operation: and thus I conjecture we are to remember truths received.

1 With what estimations and admirations wee did receive them; like those people who have the Sunne but halfe the yeere, they run after it, and are ready to adore it in its approach; so when we did receive holy truths at the first, we received them

*For the manner,  
five waies.*

*Simile.*

them as the very oracles of God, not as the words of man, but as they are indeed, the words of God.

2 With what subjection of spirit we did receive them, we did not onely admire their excellency, but felt their efficacy, the word came not in word onely, but in power and authority over our very consciences, and this power was a full power, and an easie power, the truths which we received, did command and awe, and order our whole man, and wee too were most willing to resigne up our selves to the obedience of the Gospell in all things, and to be cast into that mould of heavenly

heavenly doctrine.

3 With what affections wee did receive them; O then, those conflictings of spirit, *Heb. 10. 32* those bathes of griefe and heavenly compunction with them, *Acts 2. 37.* those flames of love, with those Christians, *Acts 4. 32.* those raptures of joy with *Lydia, Acts 16.* yea those extensions of zeale with the Galathians to Saint *Paul, Gal. 4.* the word had a surpassing influence upon all our affections, to melt, and convert, to raise, and dispose of them.

4 With what resolute loyalty, so that we did hate and despise all contrary errors and waies, and so were our hearts sworne  
to

*Heb. 10.*  
32.

*Acts 2.*  
37.

*Acts 4.*  
32.  
*Acts 16.*

*Gal. 4.*

to divine truths, and (as it were) espoused to them, that wee once resolved to live and dye in those truths, and for those truths, wee could not endure any mixture with them, nor heare of any divorce from them.

§ With what reverence wee did embrace the Ambassadors of heavenly truths, they were as the Angels of God to us, & we were like (almost) with *Cornelius*, to adore the *Peters* and *Pauls*, I meane the ministers of God revealing his truths unto us; the feet of them who brought unto us the glad tidings of our salvation, were beautifull and most acceptable unto us.

Now



Now here are two questions briefly to be resolved.

*What truths heard and received, we are often to consider and remember.*

*Quest.*

To this I answer.

*Sol.*

I There must be an endeavour to remember all the truths, as Christ said of the fragments, gather them up, and let none be lost; so it must be said of holy truths (on which the soule hath formerly fed) gather them up all, let none be lost. You see that the Goldsmith doth not onely looke after the massie piece of gold, but he carefully lookes after every ray and dust of gold, and preserves it.

*Simile.*

Every

*Simile.*

Every truth of God is precious, it is more precious than gold; it is excellent, and as it is excellent in it selfe, so it may be usefull to us, there is not a star in heaven, but is of some good to the lower world; so there is not one truth of God, but may be of some good use to a Christian.

But if either for the multitude of truths, or the sublimity of truths, or for the obscure manner of discovering these truths, or for the impotency and irretentivenesse of an unholding and unclasping memory, or for the space of time, since truths were delivered and received; it so fals out, that all  
heard

heard and once received truths will not stand upon record, into which they have beene entred, but are in many places defaced and cancelled,

2 There must at least bee a faithfull remembrance of the most necessary and chiefe truths, namely of those which more immediately and intimately, and unauoydably concern our salvation, of the which (for methods sake) I conjecture there may be three heads, *viz.*

1 That vitall truth concerning Christ and faith in him, this is the great fundamentall truth.

2 That vivificall truth concerning repentance in the conversion

*Note.*

sion of the heart from dead workes.

3 That practicall truth concerning obedience, in ordering the life and course of a converted person.

As the moralists say of Fame, or of a mans good name, *Omnia si perdas, famam servare memento. Quia semel amissa postea nullus eris.* (i) whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that iewell of a good name. That is so choyce a iewell, that whatsoever a man loseth, hee must yet take heed and care of that. The same may bee said of these forenamed truths; though through some defect, or frailty, or malignity,

any

any other historicall or problematicall truths may slip from us, yet these must be written in our hearts with the point of a Diamond, and as in marble, the characters of them are to bee kept fresh and alive, and are never to be blotted out.

*And why this faithfull and frequent remembrance, or renewed consideration of truths heard and received?*

*Object.*

Reasons thereof many.

*Sol.*

1 Though sometimes an assent may be sufficient to a particular word of truth for the present, yet the vertue and use of that may be for the future.

It is with truths as it is with treasuries, whereinto much gold

*Simile.*

N

or

or ſiluer is put and kept ſafe; a little whereof may ſerve for the time being, but moſt or all of it may be brought out upon future and ſeverall occaſions.

*Simile.*

Or as it is with friends and garments, which though wee doe not uſe every one of them every day, yet ere we dye, wee may have an uſefull occaſion for them all.

The truths which thou haſt heard from the word ten yeeres agoe, may ſerve thee twenty yeeres hence; that diſcovery of the mercy of God, of the bloud of Chriſt, of the freeneſſe of grace, &c. theſe may be of great availe unto thee, and of ſweet and proper helpe unto thee  
when

when thou comcest to old age,  
or to a dying bed.

*Simile.*

It is not with truths heard  
and received, as with our meat  
eaten and digested, the vertue of  
which may bee gone in few  
daies, but as it is with a lease,  
for life, which this yeere brings  
in our revenue, and so it doth  
the next yeere, &c. so divine  
truths may yeeld unto thee pre-  
sent comfort and strength, yea,  
and they can, being rightly em-  
braced, be the staffe in thy hand  
to morrow to support thee, and  
the river in thy conscience to re-  
fresh thee; that heavenly truth  
which was thy starre at this  
time, may fitly upon occasions,  
serve to bee thy guide at any

N z      time,

time, as the starre to the wise men, which appeared the second time.

2 *Pet.* 1.  
13.

2 Frequent remembrance of divine truths is (as it were) a spurre to further obedience, and therefore Saint *Peter* joynes, putting in remembrance, and stirring up, as if then we should revive our services, when wee did renew our memories.

Every truth newly and seriously thought on, is as it were a second Sermon or repetition, and inculcating of it upon our hearts; I am sure it is like a further digestion, which serves for the better health and strength of our bodies.

3 It is a meanes much to  
strengthen



strengthen our graces; the Philosophers have a saying, *eodem nutrimur ex quo generamur*, that wee are nourished by that of which wee are generated; the truths of God begat our graces, and the same truths well remembered and perused, will increase them.

Those promises which heretofore inclined thy heart, and perswaded it to beleeve, can perpetually beare and raise up thy heart to stronger degrees of beleeve: as Christ when he would helpe his disciples against a particular infidelity, objected unto them, *why doe ye not remember?* intimating that a right remembering of his works, would have

Mark 8,  
18.

N; inabled

inabled them much against unbelieve.

And so doth the remembrance of the words of Christ, of his truths, which are as able to build us up in grace, as to communicate it unto us.

4 It is a revocation from sinnings, as *David* said, I considered my waies, and turned. my feet unto thy testimonies; the same may be said of holy truths; a remembring consideration of them is a recovering of an erring and falling soule. Saint *Peter* forgate his Master, and then forgate himselfe, he forgate the words of a Master, and then the duty of a servant, but *Peter* recovered himselfe againe: and how

how did he so? the text saith that hee remembred the words of Iesus, and when hee had thought thereon, hee went out and wept bitterly.

§ It is an avocation or withholdment from errours; why doe men so commonly slip into new errors? one maine cause is, they have let slip old truths, they have lost their touch-stone to try doctrine by, they doe not remember what and how they have heard and received, and therefore they destroy what they themselves have built.

Like a ship which hath lost  
her anchor, tossed with waves  
and windes every way, so they  
are hurried and puffed up and  
N 4 down

*Simile.*

downe with every winde of doctrine.

But he who rightly remembers the truth, hath not onely thereby a touch-stone to try and discover contrary errours, but likewise a buckler to secure his judgement, and a sword to cut off the corrupt reasonings and fallacies of the gaine-sayer.

6 Lastly, it is of singular good, and concernement to a distressed and deserted soule, and to a debarred person.

The daies of famine may befall thee, and then the food which *Ioseph* laid up, may preserve thee, if future meanes should faile, will not former and remembred truths be of comfort?

comfort? and are you sure that  
seasons will last for ever? where  
is *Ierusalem*, who did not know  
her day of peace? and where are  
the seven Churches of *Asia*? or  
the daies of sicknesse may be-  
fall thee, wherein thou art de-  
barred of the market, I meane,  
the publike assembly of the  
Saints, and art so weakened,  
that reade at all thou canst not;  
if now thy soule can remember  
God, and remember the truths  
of God, and can secretly confer  
with them, they may be of blef-  
sed helpe and peace unto thee;  
yea, the daies of desertion may  
befall thee, the Lord may not  
looke on thee as formerly; hee  
may not confer at all with thee  
in

in sense and feeling : and what refuge hast thou now, but to flye to the truths of God, through which thou didst heretofore heare him and perceive him, and this may prove a support and solace to thy heart.

Sure I am, *Asaph* in his desolutions did so, see him in *Psal. 77.*  
*10. I will remember the yeeres of the right hand of the most high; I will remember the workes of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old : former embraces are new encouragements.*

*Psal. 77.*  
*10.*

*Vse,*

Thus for the explication and confirmation of the point, I now come to the application of it to our selves.

Should received truths be remembered?

membred? then,

1 Hearing is not all, some there are who heare not at all, they are like the deafe Adders which refuse to heare the voice of the charmer: Christ is pleased to speake, but they are not pleased to hearken: how much have these to answer for? Others doe heare, and that is all; the word is but as a naturall sound to excite that naturall facultie of hearing, but they understand not what they heare: the word preached is as a book sealed up unto them, they think it enough to come to Church, &c. Others doe heare and understand the truths delivered, but then they minde them no more,

more, they leave all at the Church doore, as wee doe our friends at the grave, forgetting that we came to a feast, to carry away, and not to a grave to leave all behinde, as if the word were a tale, or a dreame, it is instantly forgotten; in comes the world, out goes the word, to secular businesse, or sinfull acts, they presently apply themselves, and so is the word squeezed out like water out of a sponge, or the characters of it glide away like the impressions of a Seale upon the slippery water.

*Simile.*

Perhaps many a thousand Sermon they have heard in their daies (and would thinke it a mortall fault) not to heare, but  
for



for meditating, pondering, reviewing of delivered truths, calling them to minde, the better to order their hearts and lives, they will not trouble themselves so farre; as if truth were a burden, or an unworthy companion.

Now to the forgetfull hearer, I would commend these things to be considered of.

1 If his forgetfulnesse be onely of good things (when yet in any other thing and businesse his remembrance is quicke enough, he can remember a tale or story twenty yeeres since) it is a very uncomfortable signe.

I confesse that every good mans memory is not an equall  
treasurie,

*Simile.*

treasurie, nor perhaps a very fruitfull soyle, but to have a memory like an utterly barren wombe, retentive of no spirituall truths, but like sand in a glasse, put in the one part, and instantly running our to the other, this totall and absolute falsenesse in our memories, is a shrewd presumption that either wee doe not at all rightly conceive of, and understand spirituall truths, or if wee doe, yet that we doe not much care for them and respect them.

2 Forgetfulnesse of truths heard and received, is a kinde of very evill ignorance; the Schoolmen doe distinguish of *Ignorantia pure negationis*, wherein a man

man doth not know, and of *Ignorantie prave dispositionis*, wherein either a man will not, or unfits himselfe to know. Thus is it with forgetfulnesse, truths forgotten are like truths unknowne, and the more that the knowledge of former truths weare out, the lesse capacity is there to apprehend and receive further truths:

Nor is this all, forgetfulnesse is not onely a curtaine drawne over knowledge, but it is a bar also to our practise: the forgetfull hearer can be no good practitioner.

For no man acceptably practiseth more then hee knowes, and no man properly knowes  
more

*Iam. 1.*  
22.

more then he remembers.

Nor is that all, forgetfulnesse keeps us not only in an estate of ignorance and blindenesse, nor onely in an estate of barrennesse and undoingnesse, but further yet, it keepes us in a condition of sadnesse and uncomfortablenesse; for all our comforts depend upon divine truths (they are our springs of joy) but with this caution, so farre as they are solidly and rightly applied by us (as strong waters refresheth when they are taken) now the forgetting person, is an unappling person, there can be no good using, where there is no good remembring of holy truths,

*Simile.*

So

So that now by thy forgetfulness, divine truths are lost, and the operations of them are lost; they can neither guide thee nor helpe thee, nor preserve or comfort thee at all; and if all these be lost, thou thy selfe canst not be safe; whatsoever opinion thou wilt have of thy selfe, Saint *James* assures thee that thou deceivest thine own selfe; *cap. 1.22.*

*Jam. I.*  
22.

2 If remembring of truths heard and received be necessary; then be pleased to act the point which Christ here chargeth, *Remember how thou hast received and heard:* thou hast perhaps heard of the doctrine of sinne; and knowledge thereof  
O by

by the law, out of *Rom. 7. 7.*

Thou hast heard of the manifold aggravations of sinne in severall texts, as against knowledge, meanes of grace, mercies, afflictions, covenants, &c. and of infidelity (that binding sin) out of *John 3:* Thou hast heard many a Sermon of the power of the word, for conviction and conversion, and for consolation, and for conversation, and for salvation, out of *2 Thes. 1.*

Thou hast heard of the impediments of the soule from comming to Christ, partly from the love of sinne, *Iohn 3.* partly from the love of the world, *Mark. 10. 22.* partly from

from the perversenesse of our  
wils; *Math. 23. 37.*

Thou hast heard of the pre-  
parations of the soule unto  
Christ, and much of the new  
covenant, out of *Mal. 3. 1.*

Thou hast heard much of  
faith, for the nature of it, out of  
*Acts 16.* for the degrees of it, out  
of *Mark. 9.* for the use of it in  
all the promises, out of *2 Cor. 1.*  
and of our love to God, out of  
*Psal. 31. 23.*

Thou hast heard the doctrine  
of repentance from dead works  
largely opened, out of *Acts 17.*  
*30.* and further unfolded in the  
conversion of the Prodigall,  
out of *Luke 15.* and of the do-  
ctrine of temptations, out of

O 2

*Luke*

*Luke 4.* the kindes of them, and methods of defence and conquest.

Thou hast lately heard of that comfortable, ample, perpetuall care and goodnesse of Gods providence over his Church and people out of *Psal.* 23. all over.

Lastly, thou hast heard something of a languishing, and of a recovering soule from this, out of *Revel.* 3. 2.

I call God to record at this day, that (according to my knowledge and ability) I have, (as Saint Paul, *Acts* 20. 27.) not shunned to declare unto you all the counsell of God requisite to your salvation, testifying unto you all,  
repentance



repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Iesus Christ, verse 21. yea in season and out of season, in strength, in weakenesse, in publike, in private, haue I desired and endeoured your everlasting good.

Now let not these pious truths slip from you, or be as water spilt upon the ground: Ministers dye, but let not truths dye; Ministers depart, but let not truths depart; stony hearts are bad, but iron memories are good: if ye have heard truths and received them, why, still retaine the truths for the truths sake; let them ever abide with you, live with you, dye with you: And doe not locke

O 3

up

up the truths onely, but let your memories faithfully serve out those truths, according to your particular occasions and occurrences of your life; hold them out to keep out errors, bring them out to keep up graces, improve the directions of the word, to leade your waies, and the comforts of the word to refresh and encourage your hearts, and that you may skill the art of heavenly memory, know that,

*Sixe  
things.*

There are sixe things which will much availe to helpe and inable the remembrance of truths heard and received.

1 Ardent affection: love is a safe locke, and a ready hand; that

which we much like, we shall much minde, *David* was fervent in love, and therefore frequent in thinking of Gods law, *Psal. 119. Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day:* here was great love and great studying; a childe will not forget his mother.

*Psal. 119*  
97.

*Simile.*

2 Frequent meditation: many earthly things weare out by handling (as characters in gold or silver) but heavenly characters abide longest where they are most perused. Every new and serious contemplation of them, makes a fairer and firmer impression; it is like a second stamping of them. The memory is like a glasse, and the under-  
O 4 standing

standing as an eye looking back into it: the more frequent acquaintance and familiarity that the understanding hath, by reflecting on the memory, the more strongly are things ingraven in our remembrance.

3 Constant operation: if memory were more used, memory would be more usefull: when thou hast heard a Sermon, and art at home, then call thy memory to an account, how it hath played the faithfull steward for thee, what truth it hath remembred, by a daily striving to remember, you shall daily perfect the remembrance.

4 A distinct apprehension: *Saul* was not easily found in the stuffe,

stuffe, and confused mindes are  
seldome linked with exact me-  
mories; the more orderly and  
exact that the understanding is,  
the more easie is the remem-  
brance of things.

Take heed of ignorant  
mindes that know not truths,  
and of confused mindes that  
can mistake truths.

5 Abundant conference: this  
course *Moses* prescribed the  
*Israelites*, to remember the lawes  
given unto them, *viz* that they  
should often talke of them to  
their children; conference is as  
the driving in of the naile; one  
remembers that which the o-  
ther forgets; our memories  
helpe our lips, and our lips doe  
strengthen

strengthen our memories.

6 Diligent practise: the scholar by a daily writing after the copy, doth thereby mend his hand, and helpe his memory. Truths are ordained for practise; It cannot be, but that truths should remaine faithfull in the memory, which are made faithfull in our walking. Truths easily take their leave of them who oppose them, or do not act them.

Now to the second assertion,  
*viz.*

*Second.*

That acceptance of truths is not sufficient, but there must be persistence in them (*and hold fast*) *et tunc serva*, or as *Beza* translates it, *observa*.

Saint

Saint Paul is much in this doctrine; hold fast the forme of sound words, 2 Tim. 1. 13. so again to Titus 1. 9. hold fast the faithfull word; and that this doctrine may not be thought proper and peculiar to the Preacher of the truth; but common to all Christians, hee therefore enlargeth the precept to all the Romans, (and under them to all Christians) to adhere or cleave unto what is good; the word in the originall is *καταμένει τῷ ἀγαθῷ*, that they should bee glued unto it. Salomon in effect delivers the same Pro. 23. 23. Buy the truth and sel. it not, a man may lawfully sell his house and lands as the Apostles did, and followed Christ,

2 Tim. 1.

13.

Titus 1.

5.

Rom. 12.

9.

Acts 21.  
13.

Christ, and in some sense his wife and children, (as Saint *Ierome* in *epist. ad Heliod.* would rather then hee would put off Christ) yea and his owne life too, as Saint *Paul* did, not count it deare for Christ.

But the truth must not bee sold, it must be kept as a thing exceeding all price and bargain. Now for the fuller understanding of this proposition, premise with me these particulars.

1 That I speake not of humane and morall truths, such as are the rules in secular arts, in which there may bee and is many times, an infallibility; but of religious and divine truths, which are contained in the  
word



word of God.

2 Religious truths are so, either in the imagination of man, or in the reality of the thing: I am not bound to embrace, much lesse to persist in all which every man propounds for truths, or which he conjectures to be so; onely I am to hold fast those truths, which the word (rightly and genuinely expounded) teacheth and determineth to be so.

3 Againe, the truths which seeme to owne themselves on the word of God, are either immediate and expresse, or onely mediate and deduced; expresse truths are to be held fast, but deduced truths which are  
thence

thence collected by the *medium* of a mans ability to judge, these are to bee tried and examined by the prime and immediate truths, and so far to be held as they are found (upon due search) to have conformity with the immediate & expresse rules of truth.

4 Expresse truths (suppose them to be knowne and received) may be considered either in the latitude of them, or with restriction; we may not thinke it sufficient to hold fast some particular truths, either the greater or the lesser, and leave the rest to shift for themselves. But all knowne truths, even those which are not of that  
maine

maine concernement, not any one of them must be forsaken or left, but retained and maintained: as *Athanasius* and others of the first Nicene Fathers would not diminish, or adde one iota & title about the deity of Christ; or as *Moses* would not leave one hoofe behinde, so we must not renounce or forsake any one branch of known truth, seeme it never so little in the eyes of men.

§ Though there be a difference of times, yet there ought to bee no difference of holy truths; there are times of prosperity for the Gospell, as *Constantines* time was to the Church, and there are times of calamity,

calamity as *Neroes* time, and *Dioclesians*, and others the persecuting Emperours.

*Simile.*

Truth must be held fast; yea all truth, at all times; you see that the stars doe shine in the coldest night of winter, as well as in the calmest night of summer; so truths must be held in the worst as well as in the best daies.

*Iosephus* reports of the Samaritanes, that if any good and favour befell the Iewes, then they would pretend affinity and kindred with them, they came from *Iacob*; but if any calamity, then they were none of the stocke of *Abraham*. It must not be thus with us, to vary our hearty

heartly respect to truths according to the favour or discouragement that the world bestows upon them: but to cleave unto them as Saint *Paul* did, under the sword, as *S. Ignatius* among the wilde beasts, and *Laurentius* on the Gridiron, and *Daniel* among the Lyons, and the three children in the fiery furnace.

6 Sixthly, though there be a difference of persons, yet wee must not differ and wave our respects to holy truths; perhaps those holy truths which thou hast heard and tryed, and received, may bee contradicted and disputed, by some bold schismaticall, hereticall braines, who  
P would

*Simile.*

would bleare and blur the truth, that so they may bring in damnable doctrines; by these they may be disgraced, derided, and reproched, these dogs may bark against the moone and its light; yea or perhaps though they have forwardly courted & professed the truths, yet they may fall off with *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, and turne vile apostates.

But as *Peter* said of Christ, that thou must say and act too, of truth, Though all men should forsake thee, yet I will never forsake thee. Against all subtilty of disputes, variety of judgments, schisme and malice of evill men, and inconstancy of some men, thou must be rightly ballanced.

ballanced. *Hold fast the truth which thou hast heard and received.*

*But how must truths be held fast?*

In foure respects :

- 1 In the judgement and understanding.
- 2 In the will and affection.
- 3 In profession.
- 4 In conversation and practise.

1 In the judgement: for assent and approbation; there must be a firme evidence of them. I confesse that there is a latitude in our credence, upon more and more evidence of truth; there may be a further and stronger assent unto them, and approbation of them. But there must be

*Quest.*  
*Sol.*

*Eph. 4.*  
14.

no wavering in the judgement; we must not admit of a staggering and reeling minde, nor of a levity in our judgements, to be driven and carried about with every winde of doctrine, as the Apostle speakes, *Ephes. 4. 14.* *Asbanasius* knew this well, when he held his iudgement fast in the truth of the deity of Christ, against the Arians: so Saint *Austin*, his iudgement fast in the doctrine of grace against the Pelagians, and *Cyprian* against the Donatists, or Novatians, or Catharists.

It is an honour for a man to recant an errour, but a perfidious shame for any Christian to suffer any truth to be supplanted  
by



by any error.

2 In the will and affection, our love must hold the truth fast, therefore the Apostle bids us to be glued unto it, *Rom. 12. 9.* it is with truths as with some plants which live and thrive not, but in warme climates.

*Simile.*

That ancient desire after truth and delight in it, to take counsell from it, and strength from it, and comfort by it, must not decay and dye within us, but must remaine and abound, though others hate, disgrace, and endeavour to make voyd the truth, yet wee must cleave unto it, and love it, as *David, Psal. 119.*

3 In our profession; hence that advice of the Apostle in *Phil. 2. 16*

*to hold forth the word of life, even in the midst of a darke and froward generation: Christ would have us not onely to beleeve, but to confesse him before men. Remember that it was no small sinne in Peter, when he pretended that he knew not the man. Gregory Nazianzen reports in one of his orations against Iulian, that some Christian souldiers being cunningly circumvented by him to idolatrous sacrifices, perceiving the errour, they all ran backe unto him, and threw him his money againe, and protested they were Christians, and in what they did, they were circumvented by him, Heb. 10. 23. let us hold fast the profession of*

*Heb. 10.  
23.*

OMY

*our faith without wavering*; the Christian must change neither his Master, nor his service, nor his livery.

4 In our conversation; wee must still practise truths, and keepe our lives answerable unto them. Saint *Iohn* calls this a walking in the truth: then a man walkes in the truth, when hee holds on his course of holy obedience unto it, against all the encouragements and discouragements of the world, as the three children in *Daniel*, &c. not with the Galathians beginning in the spirit, and ending in the flesh, or like those Israelites, whose righteousness was as the morning dew. But we must

still runne the race set before us,  
and keep stedfast our feet unto  
the pathes of righteousness and  
waies of truth.

*Quest.*

*Why must diuine truths heard  
and receiued be held fast?*

*Sol.*

Reasons thereof are many, I  
will briefly point out some of  
them.

*Pro. 3.  
14. 15.*

1 Divine truth is a most pre-  
cious and excellent thing, there-  
fore in Scripture it is compared  
to gold, which of metals is the  
most precious, nay it is more  
precious then gold or rubies,  
and all the things which thou  
canst desire, are not to be com-  
pared unto it, see *Pro. 3. 14. 15.*  
It is more excellent then the ex-  
cellencies of the creatures, not  
then

then some of them, but then all of them; and a man if hee were to imagine any excellency, or if the utmost of his desires were enlarged, yet could they not finde out and pitch upon such an excellency. Therefore saith Saint *Iohn* to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Revel. 3. 11. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crowne*; the crowne is the top of royalties, such a thing is truth, let no man take thy crowne.

Beloved, there are two properties which assure us of the excellency of things.

1 The more holy they are, the more excellent they are; all corruptions are diminutions of excellency,

*Revel. 3. 11.*

*Two things intimate an excellency.*

cellency, the more mixt a thing is, the more it is abased, as if gold and tinne be mixed; and the more pure it is, as 'meere gold, the more glorious it is. Now the truths of God are holy, not as persons are holy (which is with mixture and imperfection) but as the light at noone day is pure without darkenesse at all.

2 The more that God is in any thing, the more excellent it is, for so much as we partake of him (who is excellency it selfe) so much more wee rise in our excellency.

But the great God is altogether seen in this word of truth: there is his wisdom, there is his power and greatnesse, there

is his love and mercifulnesse, there is his Christ and faithfulness, therefore it is most excellent, and consequently to be held fast by us.

2 Divine truths are (as it were) made over to us under termes of constancy and perpetuity: I finde in Scriptures that they are termed sometimes

Our heritage; estates which are personall (if that bee the phrase) for possession may be sold, as that which a childe buyes with his owne money; but estates which are naturall or hereditary, such I meane as come to be ours by descent, these ought to be kept for posterity: God forbid said *Naboth*, that I should

*Psal. 119*  
111.

should sell the inheritance of my fathers : divine truths are an heritage to descend from us to our children, and therefore wee are neither to dispossesse our selves of them, nor to suffer our selves by any to bee dispossessed of them, *Psal. 119. 111. thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever.*

Gods trust : something wee commit to God, something God commits to us, *2 Tim. 1. 12. He is able to keepe that which I haue committed unto him:* we trust God with our soules, and God trusts us with his truths, which are therefore called, that good thing committed to us for to keep, *2 Tim. 1. 14.* now in matters of



of trust, wee must be faithfull, for we must be responsable for the whole wherewith wee are instructed, as the servants in the Gospell, who had talents committed to their trust, they were called to an account for them : so if the Lord trust any man with graces, or with his truths, the man must carefully keepe and preserve them, for the Lord will aske him another day for his trust, as Saint *Iohn* did of the Bishop of *Jerusalem* for his *depositum*.

They observe that a trust must be, first, redelivered, secondly, wholly, thirdly, onely to him who committed it to us for trust.

3 Not

3 Not to hold fast the truths, is an exceeding and fearefull injury or wrong, it is injurious,

1 To God, for he is the Lord or God of truth : truths are ours for the efficacie of them, but onely this for the authority of them. Should a private person presume of himselfe to sell the Kings Iewels ? it might bee as much as his life is worth : truths are Gods Iewels, hee reveales them, he owne them, hee hath sealed them with the bloud of Christ, and therefore thou doest presumptuously wrong the Lord to put off the things which belong to him.

*Simile.*

2 To our covenant and vow, what was our baptisme but a  
devoting

devoting and solemne vowing  
of our selves to be faithfull to  
Christ and to his truths? wee  
solemnly professed that none  
should be our Lord, but God,  
and that we should be his faith-  
full servants unto our lives end,  
yea and wee have ratified this  
vow many a time, by comming  
to the Sacrament of the Lords  
Supper.

Now if we doe not hold fast  
the truths of Christ, but forsake  
them or any of them, wee are  
guilty of extreame perjury, not  
in a matter betwixt man and  
man, but betwixt God and  
man; thou art forsworne again  
and againe unto the Lord thy  
God, and hast (as much as in  
thee

thee lies) made voyd the covenant of grace and life for thy poore soule.

4 Consider but the necessary uses of divine truths, and then we will acknowledge that they are to be held fast.

The use of the word or divine truths, respects the everlasting and happy condition of the soule, from the beginning to the end thereof. Everlasting and true happinesse is the end and scope that every Christian lookes at; and divine truths serve him fully and effectually, to this end, both to discover it, and to bring man unto it:

There are many things required to set us in the true way,

to

to bring a man to heaven, v.g.

1 Conviction of his sinfull condition, but the word inlightens the minde, and convinceth the conscience.

2 Contrition for sinne, but the word pricks our hearts, as *Acts* 2. and humbles them.

3 Conversion of soule; but the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soule, *Psal.* 19. 7.

by it comes faith into the soule, which gets Christ, *Rom.* 10. 17. by it comes repentance, *Acts*

3. 19.

4 Augmentation of grace; but by the word wee are built up, *Acts* 20. 32. and grow more and more.

5 Perseverance in grace; but

Q

by

*Psal.* 19.  
7.

*Rom.* 10.  
17.

by the word wee are kept and established to the end, it is the power of God unto salvation, *Rom. 1. 16.*

*Rom. 1.  
16.*

What should I say more, reade the Apostle summing up all in *2 Tim. 3. 16. All Scripture is giuen by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproofe, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

*2 Tim. 3.  
16.*

*17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good workes.*

*15 Yea they are able to make us wise unto saluation, through faith which is in Christ Iesus.*

Againe, there are many encouragements comforting and supporting in our way, as diuine consolations of the spirit

of God, peace in conscience joy  
in the holy Ghost, all which are  
the myrrhe dropping onely  
from divine truths; thy word  
hath comforted me, said *David*,  
thy word hath quickned mee;  
in the house of my pilgrimage,  
they were the joyes of his heart,  
and in the daies of his calamity  
they were the stay of his heart.

Now put all together, if di-  
vine truths shew us the true  
happinesse, if they onely put us  
into the true way, unto that  
true happinesse, if they onely  
keepe us in that way, if they  
onely comfort and strengthen  
us in that way, if they onely  
bring us to the end of our  
faith, even the salvation of our  
Q 2 . . . soules,

soules, will we not, ought wee not to hold them fast?

*Vse.*

The first use of this point shall be to convince and reprove the wonderfull inconsistency of the sonnes of men, that slipperinesse and unsettlednesse of spirit, which is to be found amongst them.

Consider divine truths as they lye.

*Gal. 1. 6.* In doctrine; we may now complaine as the Apostle did of the Galathians, chap. 1. verse 6.

*I maruell that ye are so soone removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospell.*

Some revolt from the Protestant doctrine, to the Popish  
leven,



leven, others fall off from the orthodoxe articles of our Church, to Anabaptisticall fancies, and Socinian Blasphemies, and the Lord be mercifull unto us, what daily unsetlednesse and giddinesse possesseth us; if any novelty of doctrine (though a root of bitternesse) start up and be delivered with any confidence or cunning of deceiving wit, how instantly we flye off from our old truths, how greedily and madly wee sucke in poysonous errours, and being thus driven with every winde, what tempests of railing and disgraces doe wee heape upon those who crosse our ficklenesse with constant

vindications and assertions of the true doctrines of faith and life.

It makes mee to pittie this great and famous City, whiles I behold a *colluvies*, a very rabble of all opinions, and such a going and comming, touchings at, and saylings off from the land of uprightnesse: One weeke this is a truth, and almost an article; the next weeke it is no such matter, but some other thing is the right.

*Simile.*

Thus wee play many times with great truths, as children doe with their Babies, one while embrace them, anone breake them and throw them into the dirt.

But

But are there so many waies to heaven as men will make, or hast thou power to coine other articles of faith at pleasure, or will the Lord beare all this resting and mocking with his truths? Two things makes mee feare the Lord will punish us in the Gospell; one is, our generall barrennesse in life, another is our great ficklenesse in matter of truths.

2 In conversation; many times we hold the truth in unrighteousnesse: wee doe not prize the truth and love it, nor live according to it with constancy, but as the Prophet cryed out, *how is the beautifull City become an heape?* so may wee say of

---

Q 4 many,

many, how is their righteous walkings degenerated into an ungodly living? their wine is fowred, and lamp put out.

*The cau-  
ses of in-  
constanc*  
y

But I will tell you the reasons and causes of all this inconstancy and apostacy, *v. g.*

1 Men are very ignorant, and therefore very inconstant: ignorance is the great sponge to sucke in errours, as pride is the great Bawd to vent them. Chaffe may be tossed any way: that which is weak, is also light.

*Simile.*

2 Though their apprehensions be large, yet their affections are foule, they know truth, but love sinne which is contrary to truth: now a foule stomacke ever makes an ill head, and a  
secret

secret love of sinne, works out the strength of truth in the minde: men doe the more easily grow erroneous, who first grow irreligious.

3 There is an itch of pride; *Eva* and *Adam* would know more then was fit, and therefore lost all that was good; you never reade of a proud person, but either his life was notoriously tainted, or his judgement notably corrupted: the greatest errours, have fallen from those that have beene most proud, and have beene tooke up by those that have beene most ignorant.

4 And then also many have *Athenian* wits, they long for novelties,

*velties*, though the old wine be best, yet their palate must be in the fashion for new; there is a fore vanity in a naturall minde, that it cannot long fixe on any estate, or on any truth.

5 A colloging slavishnesse, many give up their soules and faith to the religion of others, and like waxe, are still fashioned to the opinions of great persons; they are afraid of their displeasures, and therefore even in points of religion, will dance after their pipe.

6 A sordid and eminent love of the world, for which *Demas* forsooke Christ, and *Iudas* sold his Master, and *Hymeneus* made shipwracke of faith: the

the unsatisfiable slave to the world will never be a faithfull servant to truth; hee who hath already pawnd his soule, will with as much ease sell off the truth.

*Spira* for its sake abjured the truth, but ventured the losse of it, and himseife too.

7 Many men are licentious, and therefore unstedfast: corrupt doctrines give more scope then the true and heavenly: wee are apt to beleeve that soonest, which pleaseth us most; erroneous points are more for pleasure, and divine truths are more for strictnesse, and therefore as those Grecians (if I forget not the story) gave up their weapons

*Simile.*

pons to enjoy their sports, so many give up the truth, to enjoy their easie and loose kinde of walking.

2 *He.*

But for you, I hope better things, though I thus speake: hitherto you have heard the good truths and waies of God, and have held them fast, I have not found you (as other people) of so unsetled and inconstant spirits. And therefore as Christ said to the Church of *Tbyatira*, the same I will presume to say unto you, *Revel. 2 24.25.* I will put upon you no other burden but that which ye have already, *boldfast*: what need I urge this with many motives?

*Rev. 2.*

24. 25.

*Motives.*

1 If it be truth, why should it be



be left? is errour better then truth? then should darkenesse be better then light?

2 Can you better your estates by leaving of truths? when the diuels fell from truth, they fell from heaven, when *Adam* fell from truth, hee fell from Paradise.

3 Will not the truth keepe you? if you keepe the truth as the ship doth the Pilot who keepeth it, truth will keepe thy soule and graces together, thy soule and Christ together, thy soule and comfort together, thy soule and prosperity together, therefore it is called the girdle of truth, because as a girdle it holds all together. Thou partest with  
strength,

strength, with joy, with safety, with blessing, with happinesse if thou part with truth.

4 The reward is sure, if thou be faithfull, not a meane reward, but that of life, even a crowne of life, *Rev. 2. 10.*

*Rev. 2.  
10.  
Rules.*

Now that you may for ever hold fast divine truths, take these rules or directions.

1 Lay a solid foundation in distinct knowledge of them; confused braines cause unsetled hearts: rest not in *Pilates* demand what is truth, nor in the *Israelites* hovering betwixt two opinions, nor in that grosse salary of religion, to take up truth upon trust, for any man sake whatsoever, were he the sharpest

*Jeremiah,*

*Jeremiah*, or the learnedst *Paul*, or the comfortablest *Barnabas*; be not satisfied this is truth, because this, that man saith, but as the honourable *Beræans* searched the Scriptures about the things which even Saint *Paul* himselfe delivered, so doe you prove all things saith the Apostle, receive truth upon an evidence of truth, if the first truth (which is the word of God) and the rule and compasse will not approve it, it is error and not truth.

*Yea, but how may wee know truths, for there are many religions, and many opinions obtruded to the world, the truth of which cannot so easily be discerned.*

*Object.*

I

Sol.

Simile.

Simile.

I answer, that true doctrine may be discerned from false doctrines, & by the unity of them, *unum & verum convertuntur*, truth is one or none, there is but one way (saith *Aristotle*) to hit the marke, but many waies to misse it; error is manifold and divers, like the image which *Nebuchadnezzar* saw mixt of gold and clay, and as *Aristotle* speakes of Vices, that they are contrary both to vertues and themselves; so erroneous doctrines are opposite to truth, and to themselves; there is no error but is like a lyer, apt to forget and wound it selfe, but truth is single, like Christs garment, undivided; as there is but

one

one Christ, so but one faith.

2 The purity of them ; all false doctrine (like treacherous physicke) gives ease; or like a whore, much in beauty, when false in honesty : what it wants in verity, it makes up in liberty; like ill wares which therefore have the larger allowances; the doctrine which is unsound, generally is licentious, as is evident in the *Mahometan* or *Popish* tenents.

*Simile.*

But truth is holy in it selfe, and to us, teaching it within the heart, and ordering it in the life. It is an adversary to sin, because all sin is an adversary unto God.

3 The efficacy of them : usually corrupt doctrines adde to

R

our

our notions, but meddle not with our corruptions; they swell us, but doe not edifie us, they are pills which onely worke upon the braine, they neither bring true grace, or sound peace with them: onely this, Satan makes the erroneous very violent, that thereby they may thinke themselves in the right.

But the doctrine which is true, is strong, it is heavenly in its nature, and mighty in its operation, comes from God, and brings to God, makes the bad good, and the good better; there is no such salve to heale a corrupted heart, nor balme to refresh a troubled conscience, as truth.

4 The antiquity of them: at  
errone

error is but the shadow and ape of truth, the saying is, *id demum verissimum quod antiquissimum*. Truth is the first borne, for God spake it, before the divell spake the other; errors may be old, but truth saw the light before them; the whole *farrago* of corrupt doctrines amongst the Papists for transubstantiation, invocation of Saints, prayers for the dead, merit, supremacy; their originals were of yesterday; though they boast antiquity, yet they dare not stand to the triall of Christ and his Apostles, who must decide all truths.

5 The simplicity of them: errors came in by the Serpent at the first, and are much of its

R 2 nature,

nature, full of windings and turnings; all corrupt doctrines are deceiveable and subtile: how many arts were fained by *Arrius* and the Arrian Bishops, to bring in their damnable errour? what forging of lyes, and odious accusations of *Athanasius*, that he was dishonest with a woman, and cut off a mans hand, as *Eusebius* relates: and so the Iesuites about *Calvin*, and *Luther*, and *Melancthon*, and *Beza*, &c. and so for the establishing of the Councell of *Trent*, the Popes Cloke-bags were weekly filled with devices and carriages.

Yea, and observe the very Papists at this day, how deceiveably confident they are, that all  
antiquity



antiquity and testimony is on their side, when either it is a packe of their owne writers onely, or other authors which they have forged, or else antiquity miserably lanced and cut, and interlaced by their *Index expurgatorius*: yea, and I pray God that many of the opinions in this City be not bolstered up with high clamours, and with artificiall lyes. But truth is naked and plaine, it is neither of a cruell nature, like *Caine*, nor of a subtile spirit with *Absalom*, nor of a lying spirit with *Ababs* false Prophets, it flatters no man, nor beguiles any: being truth, it is not ashamed of light or triall, and it alone can maintain it self against

R 3

all

all contrary quarrels : a good cause is like a good conscience, even a bulwarke to it selfe, like the sunne in its light, and heat against all clouds, &c.

5 The duration of them: truth like the sunne hath runne down through all ages: not that all men have embraced it, but that by some it hath still beene embraced: some one or more hath still beene at the barre, to beare witnessse unto it. New men have still risen up, (and sometimes out of the ashes as it were of the dead) to maintaine, and either by tongue, or pen, or bloud, to defend the truth : but

Erroneous doctrines, as they want an inward harmony, so  
also

also an outward consent, like a deceitfull brooke, they are spent after a while, or like commotions in a state, though strong or long, yet they come to an end at length, either some speciall judgments on the ringleaders, or the authority of Princes, as *Alexander* against *Arius*, or the prayers of the Saints, or the decision of lawfull counsels have still cashiered these meteors: but as it is said of divine mercy, that it endures for ever, the same is affirmed of divine truth, it runs from one generation to another; till Christ make his Church triumphant, the militant Church shall be the pillar of truth.

6 The conformity of them

R 4

to

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

to the rule or word. Erroneous doctrines like unsound flesh, cannot abide handling, and like an ill favoured woman, would have all glasses broken.

- But truth like sound gold, will endure a touch-stone, truth will be found truth upon search, bring it to the conscience, it will worke as truth; bring it to the death-bed, it will uphold as truth; bring it to the scriptures, it will hold out as truth.

2 When truths upon search are found to be truths; then embrace them for the truths sake, not upon personall and mutable causes or ends.

3 Firme resolution after tryall, by which our knowledge comes

comes to be cleare, and without doubt there must be now a plain resolution and purpose of heart in cleaving to such faithfully evidenced truths: thou must by an immoveable faith (as it were) root thy very heart in the truths of Christ, as Saint *Paul*, though bonds and afflictions, though good report or evil, though death it selfe abide him for Christ, come what will come, disputes, fancies, errors, troubles, losses, I have found the truth, and it will I hold for ever.

3 Loyall affection: then it is loyall, when it is inclusive, to every truth, &c. exclusive to nothing but truth: this loyall affection

*Cant. 3.*

tion will make us to, first, doe, secondly, suffer, thirdly, cleave: love truth, and then truth will be he'd: I held him, and would not let him goe, said the Church, then in love with Christ, *Cant. 3.* Love is the easiest key to open the heart to Christ, and the strongest locke to keepe sure the truth in our hearts: when thou hast experimentally felt the heavenly strength and comfort of Gods truths, then wilt thou certainly sticke unto them.

4 Ioyne conscience to science:  
O when people have the truths still sounding in their eares, and ungodlinesse still stirring and ruling in their lives, it cannot be,

be, that they should have strong hands, who have wicked hearts; *Hymeneus* made shipwracke of faith, and of conscience both together, 1 Tim 1.19.

1 Tim 1.  
19.

Therefore strive to obey the truths, add to thy faith vertue; be a doing Christian as well as a knowing Christian.

5 Be watchfull in prayer to God, with *David*, to uphold thee, with Saint *Peter* to establish thee, still to keepe thee, that thou mayest keepe his truths: excellent is that speech of *Bernard*, *neque enim quæ habemus ab eo, servare aut tenere possumus sine eo*; that God by whose light alone we know the truth, by his strength alone we keepe it.

*S. Bernard. in  
Psal. qui  
habitat  
pag. 283.  
Basil.*

Thus

Thus much for the text, and now for the occasion, and here I cannot be long, neither my affections nor yours will admit of large discourse, onely a word of you, and a word to you.

Of you, so regardfull have you beene to my Ministry, so loving to my person, so faithfull in your maintenance, so cheerefully encouraging generally from you all, but chiefly from the chiefest, that had it pleased the Lord to have given mee health (the which I have scarce enjoyed one whole yeere together since I have beene heere) I should not have stirred easily from such a people, for the best preferment that could be conveniently



niently offered unto me.

I speake my heart freely, I cannot tell on which side the unwillingnesse is most, whether on your part who are left, or on my part who am constrained to leave you.

But to say no more of your goodnesse, give mee leave (for the close of all) to leave a few Legacies with you, being all my friends, and hearken to my words, as the words of a dying man, for the Lord knowes how short my daies may be.

My Legacies are these :

I Lay out more time for your soules : the soule is a precious thing, the soule is a corrupted thing, sinnes are in it, much  
guilt

guilt is upon it, there is a Christ that it needs, holinesse that it must have, heaven that it would have, thy body is but clay, thy soule a spirit, the world a vanity, thy soule immortal: all is well if the soule be wel, nothing is well if that be evill: I beseech you pray more, heare more, know more, confer more, doe more and more for your soules, when you come to dye, you will then finde it to be all your worke: O then whiles health is in you, make it thy chiefest worke to seeke the kingdome of heaven and the righteousnesse thereof for your soules, feed not the slave, and starve the childe.

2 Vpon

2 Vpon good grounds make  
sure of a reconciled God: live  
not in an unreconciled condi-  
tion: no enemy like an ill consci-  
ence, and a good God: study the  
right of thy sinnes, and the  
bloud of Christ, repentance  
from dead workes, and faith in  
the Lord Iesus, so shalt thou be-  
hold the face of God and live.  
The waies of reconciliation  
with God, and the settling of thy  
conscience about it, may cost  
thee many prayers and teares,  
and diligent studies, but the love  
of God and heaven will answer,  
and recompense all.

3 Wisely improve all heaven-  
ly seasons: the Lord hitherto  
hath continued unto you, daies  
of

of peace and salvation, heavenly opportunities publike and private, and I beseech him for ever so to doe. Now receive not the grace of God in vaine, lay hold on these occasions; if there be not wisdome to improve them, there may be sadnesse for neglecting them: You see how many worthy and faithfull Ministers God hath taken away (of late) by death, and shall the present Prophets live for ever? O then in your day and time hearken, regard, repent, beleeve, live, and thrive under holy and faithfull Ministers, make more use of their doctrines, of their rules, of their counsels, of their comforts, of their

their experience and prayers, the night will come when neither we nor you must worke any longer.

4 Study the grounds and principles of religion better; first; lay good foundations, and then build on them : errours in the entrance, weaken all in the progresse. Take paines to know what that good and acceptable will of the Lord is : a well-bottomed Christian is like a well-bottomed vessell at sea, which can ride out in all weathers : no Christian stands so fast, or thrives so well as the well grounded Christian.

5 Be rather an agent, then a disputant in religion? the vanity  
S of

of wit is to argue much, but the sincerity of the heart is to doe much: for doubtfull points, and subtile novelties, let others beat them, and serve them, and in the meane while, pray thou much, that thou mayest obey the truths which thou knowest. In speculatives be wise to sobriety, in practicals be as good as thou canst: it is not the wittiest scholler, but the truest Christian who shall goe to heaven.

6 Be lesse formall, and more fruitfull: know that as we must be brought to an account for every word which we speake, so much more for every word that God speakes.

Meere godlinesse is not enough

nough under constant and great  
meanes of grace: God expects  
much when he gives much: if  
it doth not utterly cast thee, yet  
it must excessively trouble thee  
to be thin in bearing, when  
God hath been large in sowing.

7 Let all Chrillians bee of  
more fruitfull hearts and chari-  
table spirits one towards ano-  
ther. There are treacherous  
and malicious hearts enough in  
the world, thou needest not to  
helpe the divell to be an accuser  
of the brethren. It is a sad thing  
when one Christian can hardly  
trust another, and that they  
who should pittie and heale in-  
firmities, are yet inventers of  
lies and obloquies; these are the  
S 2 wounds

wounds which my friends gave me, said the Church in the *Canticles*. If thy fellow Christian doe faile, rather compassionate and succour him, then hate and reproach him; thou shalt never establish thy graces or name upon the ruines and scandals of another man; if thou be a strong Christian, be more tender, if weake, be more silent; the strong should beare the infirmities of the weake, and the weake should hearken to the directions of the strong: your graces are strong, and safety surer by love then by division, therefore be of one minde, and live in peace, let brotherly love continue.

8 Minde



8 Minde death often, and prepare for it berimes; hee who is a stranger to dying thoughts, is ordinarily a stranger to a godly life; thou wouldest hasten and better thy worke, if thou didst more looke backe on thy life, and more forward on thy death.

9 Be diligent in your particular places: the idle body can hardly hold a good soule; that man is in danger, who is all for heaven, or all for earth, both our callings must be regarded.

10 Be much in praier: the Christian usually gets the greatest blessings on his knees; God is much with him in grace, who is most with God in praier.

S 3      And

And pray not for your selves onely, but for others, and as for others, so for me, as Saint' Paul desired of the Ephesians, c.6. 19. that utterance may be given unto mee, that I may open my mouth boldly to make knowne the mystery of the Gospell, that therein (v. 20.) I may speake as I ought to speake; and so as the same Apostle in his *ultimum vale* said to those Ephesians, the same I say unto you.

Brethren, I commend you unto God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified.

*FINIS.*



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FINIS.



*Errata.*

Page 8. line 16. for *a*, read *secondly*.  
p. 147. l. 3. for *wis*, r. *we all know*, &c.  
p. 221. l. 4. for *instruited*, r. *intruited*.

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*IOH. HANSLEY.*